

A POEM FOR KIMANI GRAY, P4 • IRAQ 10 YEARS LATER, P6

# THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #185, April 3–April 30, 2013  
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

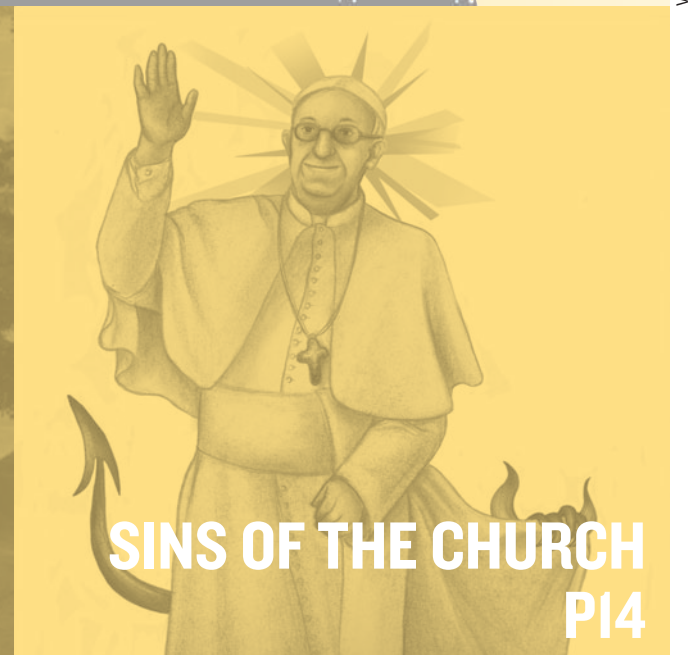
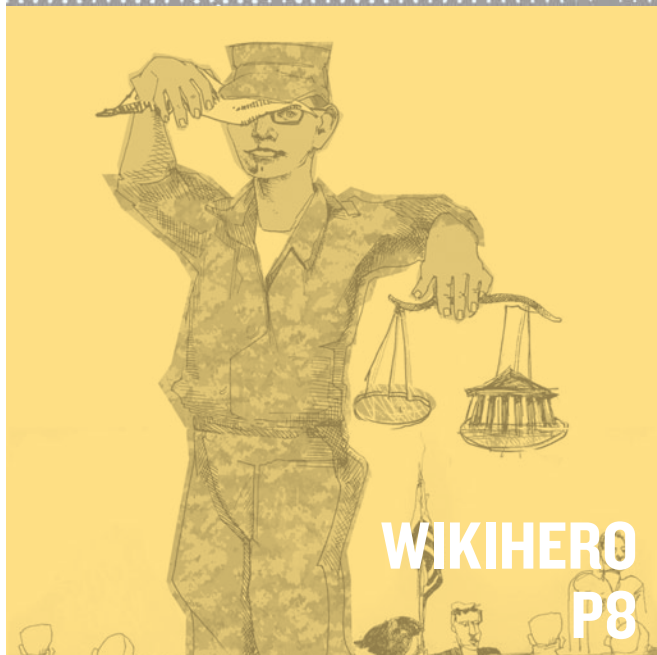
## Death of a Dreamer

VENEZUELA AFTER CHAVEZ

Ewan Robertson, p10



Hugo Chavez, 1954–2013





the reader’s voice



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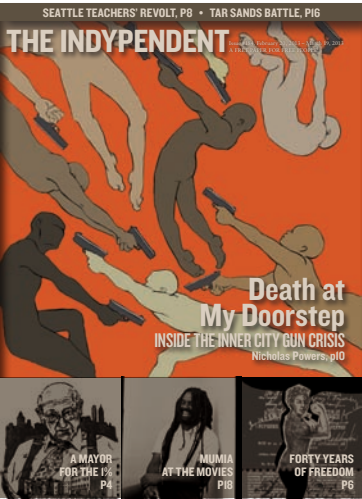
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SO MANY REASONS TO LOVE THE FEBRUARY INDY

I always enjoy my Indypendent but the last issue really took the cake. Ann Schneider’s “How Roe v. Wade Changed My Life” was powerful, especially for women. Keep pushing for Mumia’s freedom, as NONE of us are free when our truth-tellers are behind bars! Your feisty little paper is a breath of fresh air in the media blitz which is controlled by the One Percent.

In Struggle,  
FRANCES GOLDIN  
MANHATTAN, NY

WHEN UNIONS ARE PITTED AGAINST EACH OTHER

Thank you for your article in the previous issue about private-public partnerships (“Obama’s One-Sid-

ed Partnerships,” February Indypendent). Capitalists see the public sector as one of the last untapped sources of profit. Hence, Corporate America has tried to brand public sector unions as Public Enemy #1.

In the article, Laura Gottesdiener wrote, “one of the biggest problems with public-private partnerships is that the work will be contracted to private companies rather than performed by unionized, public workers — a reality that will deal another blow to the dwindling power of unions and the public sector.” This is a misreading of the situation since unionized building trade employees are often hired by private contractors that have taken over public infrastructure. Frequently, these building trades unions back politicians who back these privatization schemes. The historic rift between public sector and the building trades unions remains to be addressed.

We are at a crossroads. Although this is a depressing time, there is hope. See other stories in the February Indypendant, such as Sarah Jaffe’s coverage of Seattle teachers refusal to administer standardized tests of no use to their students (“Seattle Teachers Deliver a Powerful Lesson”) and Janice Sopp’s first-person article (“NYC Parent: Listen to Our Voices”) about the decision she and her daughter made to opt out of the test-taking charade. Like Bradley Manning, the Chicago Teachers Union and the Occupy movement, they are game changers. We can

stop this lunacy. The people united will never be defeated.  
— ARSENIA REILLY  
JERSEY CITY, NJ

QUIT MAKING EXCUSES FOR THE PAMPERED 99%

As a loyal reader of the Indy over to the past few years I have noticed one glaring oversight in the content of the articles. No matter what the fact pattern; the undocumented worker; the debt laden post graduate student; the ousted union worker; the foreclosure cases; the NYCHA tenant not receiving services, there is never any mention of the subjects’ part in their dilemma. The complete victimization of people who are the focus of your articles lends support to the myth that the so-called 99% have no power.

This is utter crap and does not help advance the situation of the person being profiled at all. What harm can it do to pose a question as to what they have done in their lives to get them to where they are and what are they doing to change their situation?

Our government is far from perfect. However, it’s because of government services that 99 percent of the population in the US has heat, flush toilets, running water and, usually, a private bed to sleep in at night. Much of the world’s population cannot even dream of such luxuries. I would like to see the 99 percent in this country acknowledge their position of privilege and take some responsibility for squandering many of these luxuries with

credit card debt for too many clothes and restaurant meals, \$4 cappuccinos, iPhones and Nikes, and bottled water.  
— ODELLA WOODSON  
MANHATTAN, NY

LARGER TYPE SIZE, PLEASE

I am a Vietnam-era veteran and a peace activist. I think you have a great paper, but the type is too damn small! I couldn’t read your February issue at all. You must do something about this. Please remember that not all of your readers (or would-be readers) have 20-20 vision.

— TARAK KAUFF  
WOODSTOCK, NY

The Editors: Thank you for contacting us about this. We look forward to hearing from other readers who may have similar concerns. We are currently discussing whether to increase the size of our type. A larger type size means fewer words per page so there are trade-offs involved.

WRITE THE INDY!  
LETTERS TO THE READER’S VOICE CAN BE SENT TO:  
LETTERS@INDYPENDENT.ORG  
OR THE INDYPENDENT/666 BROADWAY, SUITE 510/NEW YORK, NY, 10012. LETTERS MAY BE NO MORE THAN 250 WORDS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT ?

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- Seward Park Library  
192 E. Broadway  
at Jefferson St.
- Bluestockings  
172 Allen St.
- LES People’s Federal Credit Union  
39 Avenue B
- Native Bean  
50 Avenue A
- Croissanteria  
68 Avenue A
- Whole Earth Bakery  
130 St. Mark’s Pl.
- Theater for the New City  
155 First Ave.
- Tompkins Square Library  
331 E. 10th St.
- Cinema Village  
29 E. 12th St.
- St. Mark’s Books  
31 Third Ave.
- Mamoun’s Falafel Restaurant  
22 St. Mark’s Pl.
- 4th St. Food Co-op  
58 E. 4th St.
- Theater 80  
80 St. Marks Pl.

- Jefferson Market Library  
425 Ave. of the Americas
  - Housing Works  
126 Crosby St.
  - McNally Jackson Books  
52 Prince St.
  - Yippie Cafe  
9 Bleecker St.
  - Shakespeare & Co.  
716 Broadway
  - Film Forum  
209 W. Houston St.
  - Hudson Park Library  
66 Leroy St.
  - 92nd St. Y  
39 Avenue B
  - Brecht Forum  
451 West St.
- 14TH TO 96TH ST.
- TEKSERVE  
119 W. 23rd St.
  - Epiphany Library  
228 E. 23rd St.
  - Muhlenberg Library  
209 W. 23rd St.
  - Chelsea Square Restaurant  
W. 23rd St. & Ninth Ave.

- Columbus Library  
942 Tenth Ave.
  - Manhattan Neighborhood Network  
537 W. 59th St.
- ABOVE 96TH ST.
- Bloomingdale Library  
150 W. 100th St.
  - Book Culture  
526 W. 112th St.
  - Aguilar Library  
172 E. 110th St.
  - Harlem Library  
9 W. 124th St.
  - George Bruce Library  
518 W. 125th St.
  - Hamilton Grange Library  
503 W. 145th St.
  - Uptown Sister’s Books  
W. 156th St. & Amsterdam

BROOKLYN

- Brooklyn Museum  
200 Eastern Pkwy.
- Brooklyn Library  
1044 Eastern Pkwy.
- Long Island University  
1 University Plaza

- Tea Lounge  
Union St. & Seventh Ave.
- Verb Café  
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.
- Purity Diner  
43 Underhill Ave
- Pacific Street Library  
25 Fourth Ave.
- Outpost Café  
1014 Fulton St.
- YWCA of Brooklyn  
30 3rd Ave.
- Connecticut Muffin  
429 Myrtle
- Kaisa’s Café  
146 Bedford Ave.
- Bedford Library  
496 Franklin Ave.
- Parkside Deli  
203 Parkside Ave.

QUEENS

- Court Square Diner  
45-30 23rd St.
- Diversity Center  
77-11 37th St.
- CUNY Law School  
2 Court Sq.

- Brandworkers  
45-02 23rd St., 2nd Fl.
- Aubergine Cafe  
49-12 Skillman Ave.
- Philippine Forum  
40-21 96th St.

BRONX

- Brook Park  
141st St. & Brook Ave.
- Mott Haven Library  
321 E. 140th St.
- Mi Casa Bakery  
18 E. Bedford Park Blvd.

STATEN ISLAND

- St. George Library Center  
5 Central Ave.
- Port Richmond Library  
75 Bennett St.
- Everything Goes Book Café  
208 Bay St.

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FOR FREE PEOPLE

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**THROUGHOUT APRIL**  
Various times • Free  
WORKSHOP: FREE INCOME TAX PREPARATION. New York Public Library (NYPL) branches throughout the city are offering free tax counseling for seniors and individuals with income under \$50,000. Visit NYPL’s website for details.  
New York Public Library, multiple locations  
917-275-6975 • nypl.org

**SAT-SUN, APRIL 6–7**  
Sat, 11am-9pm, Sun, 12pm-7pm • Free  
EVENT: 7TH ANNUAL NYC ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR. This two-day exposition of books, zines and other anarchist materials also includes panels, workshops and skill shares for participants.  
Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center  
107 Suffolk St  
nycabf2013@gmail.com • anarchistbookfair.net

**FRI APRIL 7**  
8pm • Free  
PANEL: TO PRIVATE MANNING, THANK YOU. Join the Bradley Manning support network for a panel discussion and art auction. Panelists include Icelandic MP and Wikileaks activist Birgitta Jónsdóttir, Firedoglake.com writer Kevin Gosztola and FAIR media analyst Peter Hart. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for informal discussion, and seating for the panel discussion begins at 7:30 p.m. The panel will start at 8 p.m.  
Judson Memorial Church  
55 Washington Square S  
bradleymanning.org

**MON APR 8**  
11-6 pm • Free  
SYMPOSIUM: THE UNIVERSITY BEYOND CRISIS. Re-imagining the responsibilities of the university to the public sphere.  
CUNY Graduate Center  
34th St and 5th Ave  
revolutionizingamericanstudies.commonsgc.cuny.edu

**TUE APRIL 9**  
6:30pm • Free  
SCREENING: RED CRY. Question and answer session with Native-American elders will follow the screening.  
Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew  
263 West 86th St  
765-444-9313 • tree@lakotagrandmothers.org

**TUE APRIL 9**  
7:30pm • \$6/\$10/\$15  
DISCUSSION: GLOBAL CAPITALISM—MONTHLY UPDATE. Join economist Richard D. Wolff for an overview and analysis of major economic events that happened during the last month. The discussion will focus on the ongoing capitalist economic crisis and resistance to international austerity measures.  
Brecht Forum  
451 West St  
212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

**THU APRIL 11**  
2-5pm • \$8  
SCREENING: HESTER STREET. In this film, a young Jewish immigrant joins her husband at Ellis Island, only to find he has forsaken his Old World ways.  
Discussion with Mark Ethan, a member of the Actors Studio, to follow.  
New York City Building  
Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens  
718-592-9700 • info@queensmuseum.org

**SAT APRIL 13**  
2pm • Free  
PERFORMANCE: PUBLIC EXCHANGE JAZZ CONCERT. Join the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) for an outdoor Jazz concert featuring a

performance by Grammy award winning trumpeter and producer, Maurice “Mobetta” Brown. This event is presented in partnership with the Farragut Houses Tenants Association and the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival.  
Farragut Houses  
York St, Brooklyn  
718-230-0492 • mocada.org

**SUN APRIL 14**  
5pm • Free  
PANEL: ART AS RESISTANCE. Join members of the Jenin Freedom Theatre in Palestine for a discussion about politics, theater and the importance of resistance. RSVP recommended to palestine@columbia.edu.  
Columbia University  
116th St & Amsterdam  
Schermerhorn Building, 5th Fl  
212-854-1754 • thefreedomtheatre.org

**MON APRIL 15**  
5:30pm • \$25  
TALK: THE NEW AMERICAN MILITARISM—HOW AMERICANS ARE SEDUCED BY WAR. Andrew Bacevich, a professor at Boston University, will discuss the emergence of the U.S. military as a vehicle for national values and how Americans can change the policies that make this possible. Reception to follow at 6:30 p.m.  
Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs  
Merrill House  
170 E 64th St  
212-838-4120 • publicaffairs@ccea.org

**TUE APRIL 16**  
6:30pm • Free  
DISCUSSION: LOWER EAST SIDE—THEN AND NOW. Author Eric Ferrara will discuss his new book about the impact of gentrification on the Lower East Side and how the neighborhood still manages to retain its character.  
Tenement Museum, Museum Shop  
103 Orchard St  
212-431-0233 • tenement.org



**WORKERS UNITE:** The Rude Mechanical Orchestra will be leading the Tax Day march on April 17.

**TUE APRIL 17**  
4pm • Free  
ACTION: WAR TAX RESISTANCE. Join the New York chapter of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) at the Manhattan IRS office for a demonstration against the United States’ use of taxpayer money to fund wars instead of human needs, peace and justice. NWTRCC and the Rude Mechanical Orchestra will then march to the main post office at 34th St. and Eighth Ave. at 5 p.m. For more information, email nycwrl@att.net.  
Manhattan IRS Office  
110 W 44th St  
718-768 7306 • nwtrcc.org

**APRIL 19–21**  
12-6pm • Free  
INTER-ACTIVE MULTI-MEDIA EXHIBIT: SANDY STORYLINE. Initiated by activists and media makers with ties to the Occupy movement, Sandy Storyline is a community-generated narrative of the storm and its aftermath that features audio, video, photography and text stories contributed by residents and citizen journalists. Some of this project’s most compelling work will be on display.  
Tribeca Film Festival Exhibition, Dune Studio  
121 Varick St, 7th floor  
sandystoryline.com

**SUN APRIL 21**  
11am-6pm • Free  
EVENT: EARTH DAY NY AT UNION SQUARE. Celebrate Earth Day and enjoy live performances, a green-vehicle exhibition and runway and displays by local and national environmental organizations.  
212-922-0165 • earthdayny.org

**MON APRIL 22**  
6:30pm • Free  
DISCUSSION: WOMEN, THE ENVIRONMENT AND FRACKING—EARTH DAY 2013. Join Women’s eNews for a special Earth Day conversation about the range of environmental hazards—from beauty products to fracking—that are currently facing women. Panelists will include award-winning health reporter Molly M. Ginty and Ogonnaya Dotson-Newman, a research coordinator focusing on environmental health with WE ACT.  
Women’s eNews  
6 Barclay St, 6th Fl  
212-244-1720 • womensenews.org

**TUE APRIL 23**  
6:30pm • Free  
TALK: FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ. Lappé, a global food and democracy activist, will discuss her book, Ecomind: Changing the Way We Think, To Create the World We Want, in which she tackles how faulty ways of thinking

orders from the White House to do whatever is necessary to hunt down, capture or kill individuals designated by the president as enemies.  
Barnes & Noble  
97 Warren St  
212-822-0250 • nationinstitute.org

**FRI-SUN, APRIL 26–28**  
Various times • \$30-\$50  
CONFERENCE: HISTORICAL MATERIALISM. Speakers at this year’s conference include Tariq Ali, David McNally and Frances Fox Piven.  
New York University  
Silver Center  
31 Washington Pl  
organizers@hmny.org • hmny.org

**SAT APRIL 27**  
8pm • \$18, sliding scale  
PERFORMANCE: THE PEACENIKS, GEORGE MANN & RIK PALIERI. Join Peoples’ Voice Cafe for performances by The Peaceniks, who will be releasing their third CD this spring, Mann, a former New York Union Organizer who sings songs of social activism, and Palieri, who plays the Native American flute and Polish bagpipes. All proceeds benefit the Peoples’ Voice Cafe. No one turned away for lack of funds.  
Peoples’ Voice Cafe at The Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist  
40 E 35th St  
212-787-3903 • peoplesvoicecafe.org

**SUN APRIL 28**  
3pm • Free  
EVENT: POETRY BIKE RIDE. Come celebrate National Poetry Month with Critical Mass by participating in this kinetic poetry reading, which offers bicycle poets a chance to read and perform works at inspiring locations. Participants will meet under the arch in Washington Square Park.  
Washington Square Park, 5th Ave and Washington Square N  
212-802-8222 • times-up.org

**WED MAY 1**  
12pm • Free  
RALLY: MAY DAY. NYC’s annual celebration of International Workers Day kicks off at the south end of Union Square, E. 14th St and Broadway  
Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights  
212-633-6646 • www.may1.info

2pm – 3:30 • Free  
FREE UNIVERSITY: EDUCATION CONVERGENCE. There will be outdoor free universities around the city on May Day featuring classes on an array of social justice topics. At 2pm, educators will gather at the Cooper Square Triangle and march to Union Square at 3:30 and return for festivities in the evening.  
3rd Ave. and E. 7th St  
freeuniversitynyc.org



4pm • Free  
May Day Convergence! Labor, immigrant, student and community groups from across the city will rally at the south end of Union Square and then march down Broadway to City Hall.

**SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS AT  
INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM**



NO EXIT

An Elegy for KIMANI GRAY

When cleaning his room, they may see a shirt tossed over a chair and smell him, faint, on the collar. They may embrace his pants, as if carrying him to bed like when he was a child. A box may be unfolded, his things taken from an intricate web of placement — his stack of DVDs or baseball cap on the chair, his schoolwork — each object an anchor holding him to this world. Just days ago, he was alive, their son. Now he is an aching memory that pulls away their deepest joys and hurls them into emptiness.

They place his absence inside the box. Duct tape stretched across the seams. It has to be. When we love those we’ve lost that love turns us inside out and pain rises above our voice to drown us, the loss must be contained. If not, we die too.

The son’s absence is seen briefly, in candlelight. In the clutch of family, it is carefully squeezed from the body. In the politician’s speech, his absence is lifted to history. In the pastor’s sermon, it is frozen, in the love of God shining on his face in the coffin.

And with each act of containment and distance, he becomes everyone’s son. People gather outside the church and many carry an emptiness in their arms they once called brother or father, sister or mother, uncle or aunt, friend or lover. Filing past the coffin, they purify their loss with his innocence. He is everyone’s son. He is everyone’s bullet hole. He is everyone’s stop-and-frisk, everyone’s arrest, everyone’s time in jail, everyone’s envy of the rich and shame of poverty, everyone’s dying inside the shadow painted on their skin, everyone’s fear of who they will never be.

They poured their emptiness into his name and threw it at cops, threw it at windows, punched it onto a man’s face in a store and hammered it onto the shelves. They had nothing but his name and blind fury and no exit.

And wherever his name crashed, a brief light showed a world of shadows, writhing, in a city of closed eyes.

Here is a chalk outline on the sidewalk that any boy or girl can be buried in. Here is yellow police tape used to make mummies out of children. Here is a pool of blood that can be your mirror. Here the name nigger belongs to you like a four-hundred-year-old chain. Here your skin is a night of screaming. Here your lips are red from fighting your reflection. Here, prayer is a broken ladder that you will climb anyway.

I want you to know there is no point telling you his name because you will forget it.

I want you to know that another child will be killed today, most likely by a peer, because black-on-black death is a veil in front of a veil. I want you to know the police load their guns with the stars of the American flag. And secretly, many of us are grateful. We’re scared of people without faces.

And they will keep dying inside the closed eyes of the city because for them there is no exit.

— Nicholas Powers

Trying to Hold Some Space



**CAN'T STOP HIP-HOP:** Members of the Rebel Diaz Art Collective (RDAC-BX) outside of the group’s former community space at 478 Austin St. in the South Bronx. Founded by brothers Gonzalo and Rodrigo Venegas (center) of the hip-hop group Rebel Diaz and allies in 2008, the music and arts collective was forcibly evicted from its space on Feb. 28. RDAC-BX has launched an active fundraising campaign in order to secure a new home. To learn more, visit [rdacbx.blogspot.com](http://rdacbx.blogspot.com).



**RADICAL RADIO:** Musicians Chico Alvarez (second from left), Orlando Marin (fifth from left) and friends play up a storm at SOB’s in lower Manhattan on March 27, during a fundraising dance party for WBAI-99.5 FM. After being hit hard by Hurricane Sandy and falling behind on rent payments for its antenna on top of the Empire State Building, the radio station is seeking to raise \$500,000 to secure the antenna and keep its 50,000-watt signal live. To learn more, visit [give2wbai.org](http://give2wbai.org).

# Ready to Resist



CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION LOCAL 1/FICKER

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis (center) speaks at a March 27 rally to protest the slated closings of 54 Chicago public schools. NYC teachers running in elections against their union's leaders say the CTU is a model for the kind of union they want to build.

BY JOHN TARLETON

Late on the Thursday afternoon before spring break 15 teachers gathered around a long table in the back corner of a tapas bar in Chelsea.

Faced with a daily grind of standardized test prep, performance metrics, data management and pervasive job insecurity that increasingly defines their existence as teachers, they were looking forward to a week's respite. But, they were also discussing this April's elections in the United Federation of Teachers and how they might be able to rejuvenate a union that they say has failed to effectively resist the corporate-style education reforms that Mayor Michael Bloomberg has implemented over the past 12 years.

"Resistance is not futile if we join forces with the people in the communities we serve," said Sean Ahern, a teacher who works with troubled youth at Rikers Island, as the group went around the table introducing themselves and describing the teaching work they do.

The happy hour gathering was organized by the Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE), an opposition caucus that is battling the UFT's entrenched leadership. The union is seeing growing discontent among the rank-and-file as members are battered by the changes Bloomberg and his corporate allies have implemented. The meetup was a chance for teachers who are starting to become involved to meet with colleagues who are already active in MORE.

"Teachers are scared. The UFT can't protect them, which is why people are looking more favorably on MORE," said Gloria Brandman, a Brooklyn elementary school teacher and one of MORE's co-founders.

That message resonated with Henry Funes, a 25-year teaching veteran. "I've never seen it as bad as this. We're virtually powerless and voiceless," Funes said. "The UFT's attitude is, 'be grateful you have a job.'"

## REBUILDING

MORE was formed last year by members of several left-leaning teacher groups. Many MORE members have joined protests in recent years against school closings and charter school co-locations inside existing public schools carried out by the NYC Department of Education. In the 170,000-member UFT, they see an institution with the resources

and the citywide reach into school communities to lead a powerful fightback against Bloomberg's policies — including mayoral control of schools — which have proven increasingly unpopular with parents. But first, they say, the UFT must transform itself and become an organization that fully encourages member participation and forges strong ties with the communities it serves.

"The membership is not educated, organized and mobilized, and that has hurt us," said Julie Cavanagh, an elementary school special education teacher who is MORE's candidate for president against UFT chief Michael Mulgrew.

Cavanagh's candidacy is a by-product of New York's school wars. She first became politicized several years ago when she led a community struggle in Red Hook against a politically-connected charter school that was looking to take over much of the school where she teaches.

Campaigning with minimal resources, MORE has held happy hour gatherings like the one in Chelsea, organized public forums to discuss issues of importance to educators, set up social media sites and email lists, and distributed tens of thousands of flyers to members at school campuses. It's this kind of patient, bottom-up organizing that MORE activists hope will enable them to make inroads this year against the Unity Caucus, which has controlled the UFT since shortly after its founding in 1960.

"They [MORE] are bringing the message that you are not alone to teachers who want to resist," says Lois Weiner, a professor of education at New Jersey University and the author of *The Future of Our Schools: Teachers Unions and Social Justice*. Voting in the elections runs from April 3 to 25.

## CHICAGO STORY

For inspiration, MORE looks to the militant Chicago Teachers Union and the Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators (CORE), the left caucus that vaulted into power in 2010. CORE's victory was fueled by rank-and-file dissatisfaction with the response of union leaders to attacks on Chicago's public school system by city leaders. Before taking the helm at CTU, teachers from CORE had spent years fighting alongside parent and community groups to prevent school

Continued on page 16



DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

TUNE IN

**NYC RADIO**

WBAI 99.5FM 8am M-F

**NYC TELEVISION**

**CUNY-TV**

6:30pm M-F, 1am Tu-F

**Manhattan MNN**

8am and 7pm M-F

**Brooklyn BCAT**

9am M-F

**DISH Network & DirecTV**

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and midnight M-F

8am, noon, 7pm Sat

8am, noon Sun

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APR 6

*Sima Cunningham, Jacob Bernz & Arjuna Greist*

APR 13

*The Roy Korona Band*

APR 20

*Roy Zimmerman*

APR 27

*The Peaceniks*

*George Mann & Rik Palieri*

★ SATURDAYS AT 8 P.M. ★

Community Church of New York Unitarian-Universalist

40 E. 35th St. (Madison/Park)

New York, NY 10016

doors open 7:30; wheelchair accessible

212-787-3903

www.peoplesvoicecafe.org

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WED APR 10 • 7PM • FREE

READING: KARMA CHÁVEZ “AGAINST EQUALITY: PRISONS WILL NOT PROTECT YOU”

Founded in 2009, The Against Equality Collective recently published the third book in its trilogy that challenges the mainstream gay and lesbian movement’s emphasis on marriage, military, and hate crime legislation. Collective member Karma Chávez will read from and discuss “Against Equality: Prisons Will Not Protect You,” examining prisons and hate crime legislation.

MON APR 15 • 7PM • \$5 SUGGESTED

PRESENTATION: “WE ARE NOT MACHINES! THE STRUGGLES OF SLAVE WORKERS IN CHINA” WITH MEMBERS OF THE GONGCHAO COLLECTIVE

The Chinese-Taiwanese company Foxconn employs more than one million people in China alone. As the world’s biggest contract manufacturer in electronics, it works for Apple and many other large brands — but, as revealed in the spotlight drawn by a series of worker suicides in 2010, Foxconn’s workers face horrendous working conditions. A contributor to the gongchao collective will report on the exploitation in **these factories and Foxconn workers’ resistance.**

FRI APR 19 • 7PM • FREE

READING: BARBARA JENSEN “READING CLASSES” How is class translated into culture? What are cultures’ roles in keeping class in place? What is the psychology of moving from working class to professional-middle class life, when it can be fraught with questionable — or even cruel — consequences for the individuals who actually do “make it”?

## MIDDLE EAST

# A New Iraq Rising

BY ALI ISSA

As the world marked 10 years since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, many thought of that place again, perhaps for the first time in years. Discussions continued to be dominated by the buzzword sectarianism, which refers to and is used to analyze any tension or conflict that exists in the country today.

Most people perceive sectarianism to be an inherent struggle indigenous to Iraq, and not as a political byproduct that serves the interests of a powerful few. Few remember that sectarianism in Iraq was explicitly encouraged, first by Saddam Hussein’s regime and regional actors, and then by the political ethno-sectarian quota system written into Iraq’s 2005 constitution by occupying forces.

Even those who can see through the smokescreen of sectarianism, and whose central concern is the people of Iraq — their daily lives, communities and dreams — focus on the devastation and corruption that the last decade has brought: body counts, failed infrastructure and how powers like the United States and Iran continue to dominate Iraq’s political scene.

Few discussions address the political struggles waged by the Iraqi people and the victories that they can claim as their own. These struggles are rooted in Iraq’s history of building movements that bring together different sects and ethnicities, and delegitimize the notion of sectarianism typifying contemporary Iraq.

## LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS

Iraqis have organized a number of large street demonstrations since 2003, often in response to the occupation, its violence and the criminal levels of corruption it unleashed among local Iraqi politicians.

On Feb. 25, 2011, inspired by the uprisings across the Arab world, “The Iraqi Day of Rage,” a weekly Friday protest cycle, began in many of Iraq’s major cities. It was the rejuvenation of a protest movement that had been brutally suppressed by the Iraqi government. The demands were diverse, ranging from addressing chronically high unemployment and lack of services like electricity to opposing the entire U.S.-installed sectarian regime and occupation. Certain Fridays were themed around particular issues, with March 18, for example, dubbed the “Friday of the Imprisoned,” drawing attention to Iraq’s thousands of political prisoners and demanding their release.

Leaders, like the al-Zaidi brothers (Uday, Thurgham and Muntazar, famed for throwing a shoe at George W. Bush) began to emerge, and other civil society leaders affiliated with labor and women’s groups got heavily involved. Several popular Iraqi protest Facebook pages appeared, and by April 25, gatherings in the form of open-ended sit-ins sometimes reached the tens of thousands. In the northern city of Mosul, protestors called a general strike that froze all

commerce and even pushed the local governor, Atheel al-Nujaifi, to back the protests and support the defiance of a government-imposed curfew.

The government responded with serious tactics of repression, firing tear gas as well as live ammunition, and setting up checkpoints that forced people to walk for hours in the scorching heat to what would otherwise be nearby squares. Security forces also banned all pens, markers, poster board and water bottles.

## WHERE’S THE MEDIA?

These important and large-scale mobilization efforts have received little international media attention, even among Arabic language outlets. In February 2012, Iraqi organizer Uday al-Zaidi was quoted in the Lebanese newspaper *al-Akbbar*, saying, “We have sent our statements time and again to news networks such as Al-Jazeera, but they barely ever even call us. In fact, you are the only non-Iraqi media who has called me today.”

Asked why he thought Iraq’s protesters did not make the news in the same way as those participating in other Arab uprisings, al-Zaidi said, “We do not follow the politics of any [foreign] state. Most of the international community has been complicit in crimes against the Iraqis. So it interests no network to really shed a light on us. That means we need to rely on ourselves, as individuals, to do our own media work.”

## BEYOND THE SECTARIAN FRAME

In late December 2012, protestors took to the streets to oppose a decision taken by Nouri al-Maliki’s government to imprison the bodyguards of Iraqi finance minister Rafi al-Issawi. While many perceived this to be motivated by sectarianism, the protestors were not defending the Iraqi minister, whom they perceived to be another member of a corrupt government, but were objecting to sectarianism itself.

What began then as a seemingly limited public reaction to this decree quickly grew to encompass many of the initial demands of the February 25 movement. These included the release of political prisoners, especially the thousands of women detained, more jobs and better services, and the removal of the Iraqi constitution. People were especially opposed to a ‘terrorism’ law used often by the Iraqi government to target protestors with accusations of ties to al-Qaeda or the Ba’ath Party, formerly headed by Saddam.

By mid-January, the protests had spread to three other provinces in Iraq, al-Anbar, Ninawa, and Salah al-Deen. Media attention finally came to the protestors, but in the language of sectarianism that pigeon-holed the protests as driven by sectarian strife, without taking into account any of the social grievances that formed these large demonstrations. None of the media attention focused on the explicit anti-sectarian slogans or on the important role of women in these movements.

The protests are now approaching their fourth straight month, and Iraqi union leader Falah Alwan’s late January analysis still rings true:

“This moment could be a crossroads for more than one possibility—all is open now. First, it is possible that these protests could transform into a broad social revolution that changes the political system and builds another. And a new socio-political model could develop, one that opposes the model imposed on, and advertised for, in the region.”

*Ali Issa is based in New York City and is the national field organizer for War Resisters League. He earned a Master’s Degree in Arabic studies from the University of Texas at Austin in 2008. He is a contributor to the e-zine Jadaliyya on Iraqi social movements and his translations have appeared in Banipal and the PEN World Atlas Blog. His father is from Baghdad, Iraq.*

*An earlier version of this article appeared at [shakomako.net](http://shakomako.net), a digital magazine about everything Iraqi.*

## THE COST OF WAR

According to estimates by the National Priorities Project, the cost of the Iraq War to U.S. taxpayers from 2003 to the end of March 2013 was \$812.4 billion. New York City residents picked up \$26.9 billion of the tab. This is what we could’ve done with the same amount of money, for the course of an entire year:

PAID THE ENERGY COSTS OF 9.3 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS

or  
PROVIDED LOW-INCOME HEALTHCARE FOR EITHER 10.8 MILLION CHILDREN OR 3.2 MILLION ADULTS

or  
PAID THE SALARIES OF 316,635 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

or  
PROVIDED 2.9 MILLION HEAD START SLOTS FOR CHILDREN

or  
CONVERTED 18 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS TO RUN ON ONLY SOLAR ENERGY

or  
CONVERTED 37.9 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS TO RUN ON ONLY WIND ENERGY

or  
PROVIDED VA MEDICAL CARE TO 2.7 MILLION MILITARY VETERANS

or  
BOUGHT GROCERIES FOR 12.8 MILLION INDIVIDUALS

or  
PROVIDED PELL GRANTS OF \$5,550 TO 4.8 MILLION COLLEGE STUDENTS.

Sources: National Priorities Project via [costofwar.com](http://costofwar.com).



# War Without End

BY KATHY KELLY

Ten years ago, Iraqis braced themselves for the anticipated “shock and awe” attacks that the United States was planning to launch against them. The media buildup for the attack assured Iraqis that barbarous assaults were looming. I was living in Baghdad at the time, along with other Voices in the Wilderness activists determined to remain in Iraq, come what may. We didn’t want the U.S.-led military and economic war to sever bonds that had grown between ourselves and the Iraqis who had befriended us over the past seven years. Since 1996, we had traveled to Iraq numerous times, carrying medicine for children and families there, in open violation of the economic sanctions that directly targeted the most vulnerable people in Iraq — the poor, the elderly and children.

I still feel haunted by children and their heartbroken mothers and fathers who we met in Iraqi hospitals.

“I think I understand,” murmured my friend Martin Thomas, a nurse from the U.K., as he sat in a pediatric ward in a Baghdad hospital in 1997. “It’s a death row for infants.” Nearly all of the children were condemned to death, some after many days of writhing in pain on bloodstained mats — and all this without pain relievers. Some

died quickly, wasted by water-borne diseases. As the fluids ran out of their bodies, they appeared like withered, spoiled fruits. They could have lived, certainly should have lived — and laughed and danced, and run and played — but instead they were punished by sanctions against a dictatorship over which civilians had no control.

The war ended for those children, but it has never ended for survivors who carry memories of them. Likewise, the effects of the U.S. bombings continue.

Upon arrival in Baghdad, we would always head to Al Fanar Hotel, which had housed scores of previous delegations.

Often, international guests like us were the hotel’s only clients. But in early March of 2003, rooms were filling quickly at Al Fanar. The owner invited his family members, some of his neighbors and their children to move in, perhaps hoping that the United States wouldn’t attack a residence known to house internationals.

Parents in Iraq name themselves after their oldest child. Abu Miladah, the father of two small girls, Miladah and Zainab, was the hotel’s night desk clerk. He arranged for his wife, Umm Miladah, to move with their two small daughters into the hotel. Umm Miladah warmly welcomed us to meet her children. It was a blessed release to laugh and play with the children, and our antics

and games seemed at least to distract Umm Miladah from her rising anxiety as we waited for the United States to rain bombs and missiles.

When the attacks began, Umm Miladah could often be seen shuddering from fear. Day and night, explosions would rattle the windows and cause Al Fanar’s walls to shake. Ear-splitting blasts and thuds would come from all directions, near and far, over the next two weeks. I would often hold Miladah, who was three years old, and Zainab, her 18-month-old baby sister, in my arms. That’s how I realized that they both had begun to grind their teeth, morning, noon and night. Several times, we witnessed eight-year-old Dima, the daughter of another hotel worker, gazing up in forlorn shame at her

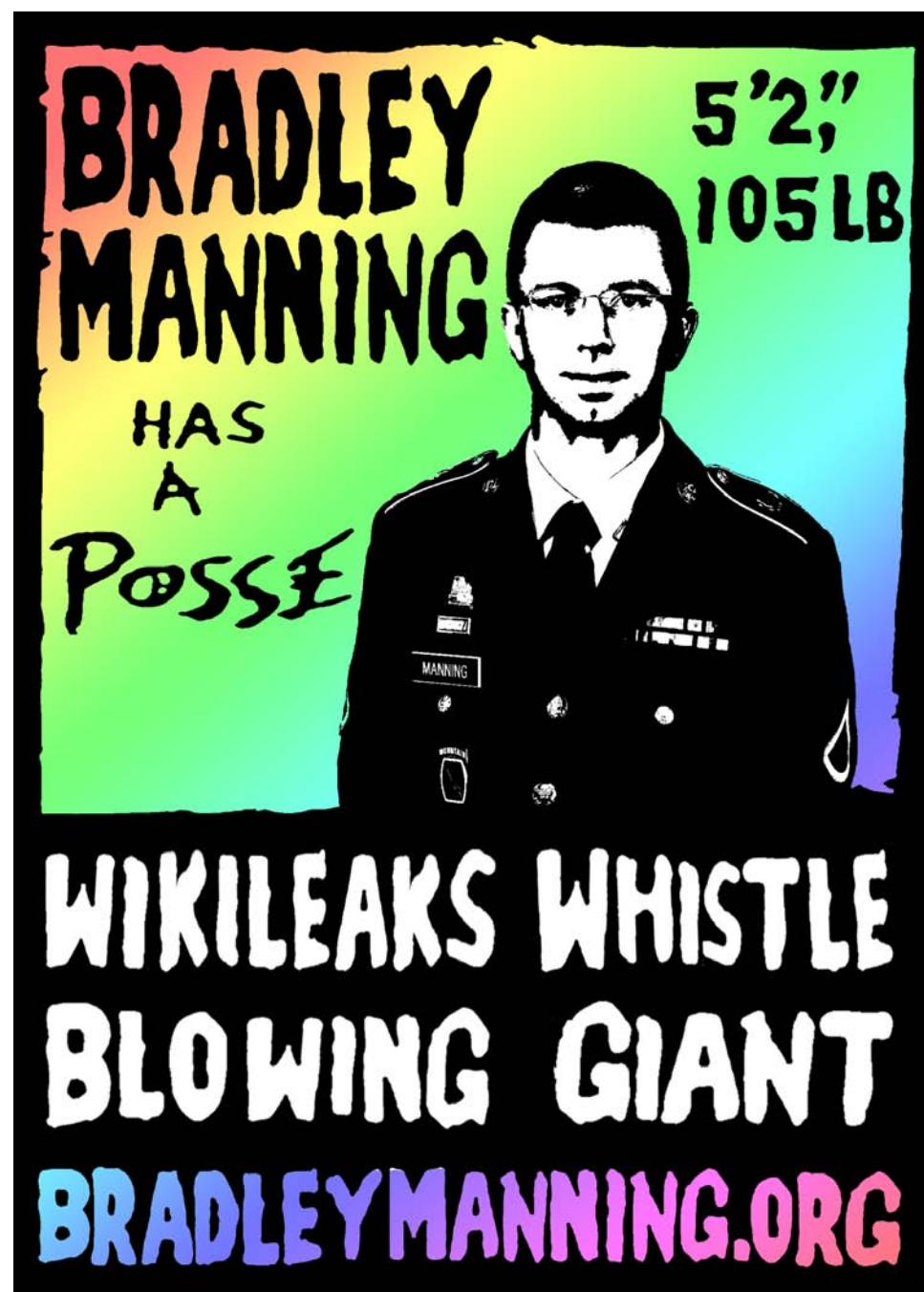
father from a pool of her own urine, having lost control of her bladder in the first days of “Shock and Awe.”

After weeks, when the bombing finally

*Continued on page 16*



MARLENE BUZEK SMITH





# 'This Type of Information Should Become Public'

*In a pre-trial hearing on Feb. 28, 2013, 25-year-old U.S. Army Private Bradley Manning admitted for the first time to providing hundreds of thousands of U.S. government documents to WikiLeaks. He pled guilty to 10 of 22 charges being pressed by military prosecutors. Following are excerpts from his hour-and-a-half long testimony in Fort Meade, Md, in which he explained what he leaked and why:*

## FROM: FACTS REGARDING THE UNAUTHORIZED STORAGE AND DISCLOSURE OF THE SIGACTS.

As I started working with Significant Activities (SIGACTs), I felt they were similar to a daily journal or log that a person may keep. They capture what happens on a particular day and time. They are created immediately after the event and are potentially updated over a period of hours until a final version is published on CIDNE.

For me, the SIGACTs represented the on-the-ground reality of both the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. I felt we were risking so much for people that seemed unwilling to cooperate with us, leading to frustration and hatred on both sides.

I began to become depressed at the situation that we found ourselves increasingly mired in, year after year. The SIGACTs documented this in great detail, and provided context to what we were seeing on the ground. In attempting to conduct counterterrorism (CT) and counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, we became obsessed with capturing and killing human targets on lists, on being suspicious of and avoiding cooperation with our host-nation partners, and ignoring the second and third order effects of accomplishing short-term goals and missions.

I believed that if the general public, especially the American public, had access to the information contained within the CIDNE-I and CIDNE-A tables, this could spark a domestic debate on the role of the military and our foreign policy in general, as well as it related to Iraq and Afghanistan. I also believed a detailed analysis of the data over a long period of time, by different sectors of society, might cause society to re-evaluate the need, or even the desire to engage in CT and COIN operations that ignored the complex dynamics of the people living in the affected environment each day.

I felt a sense of relief by them [WikiLeaks] having it [the information]. I felt had accomplished something that allowed me to have a clear conscience based upon what I had seen, read about and knew were happening in both Iraq and Afghanistan every day.

## FROM: FACTS REGARDING THE UNAUTHORIZED STORAGE AND DISCLOSURE OF THE 12 JULY 2007 AIR WEAPONS TEAM (AWT) VIDEO.

The video depicted a several individuals being engaged by an Air Weapons Team (AWT). At first, I did not consider the video very special, as I had viewed countless other "war-porn" type videos depicting combat. However, the recorded audio comments by the AWT crew and the second engagement in the video, of an unarmed bongo truck,

troubled me.

Using Google, I searched for the event by its date and general location. I found several news accounts involving two Reuters employees who were killed during the AWT's engagement. Another story explained that Reuters requested for a copy of the video under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Despite the submission of a FOIA request, the news account explained that CENTCOM (U.S. Central Command) replied to Reuters, stating that they could not give a timeframe for considering the FOIA request, and the video might no longer exist. Another story I found, written a year later, said that even though Reuters was still pursuing their request, they still did not receive a formal response or written determination in accordance with the FOIA.

The fact neither CENTCOM nor Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MCF-I) would not voluntarily release the video troubled me further. It was clear to me that the event happened because the AWT mistakenly identified the Reuters employees with a potential threat, and that the people in the bongo truck were merely attempting to assist the wounded. The people in the van were not a threat, but "good Samaritans."

The most alarming aspect of the video to me, however, was the seemingly delightful bloodlust they appeared to have. They dehumanized the individuals they were engaging, and seemed to not value human life by referring to them as "dead bastards" and congratulating each other on the ability to kill in large numbers.

At one point in the video, there is an individual on the ground attempting to crawl to safety. The individual is seriously wounded. Instead of calling for medical attention to the location, one of the AWT crew members verbally asked for the wounded person to pick up a weapon so he would have a reason to engage. For me, this seems similar to a child torturing ants with a magnifying glass.

## FROM: FACTS REGARDING THE UNAUTHORIZED STORAGE AND DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS RELATING TO DETAINMENTS BY THE IRAQI FEDERAL POLICE (FP), THE DETAINEE ASSESSMENT BRIEFS (DABS), AND THE USACI REPORT.

A report was received from a subordinate battalion. The report described an event in which the FP detained 15 individuals for printing "anti-Iraqi" literature...Over the course of my research I found that none of the individuals had previous ties to anti-Iraqi actions or suspected terrorist militia groups.

[The unit interpreter] said the general nature of the document was benign. The documentation, as I assessed as well, was merely a scholarly critique of the then-current Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. It detailed corruption within the cabinet of al-Maliki's government and the financial impact of his corruption on the Iraqi people. After discovering this discrepancy between the FP's report and the interpreter's transcript, I forwarded this discovery to the TOC OIC and the battle NCOIC.

The TOC OIC and, the overhearing Battle Captain, informed me they didn't need or want to know this information any more. They told me to "drop it" and to just assist them and the FP in finding out where more of these print shops creating "anti-Iraqi literature" might be. I couldn't believe what I heard.

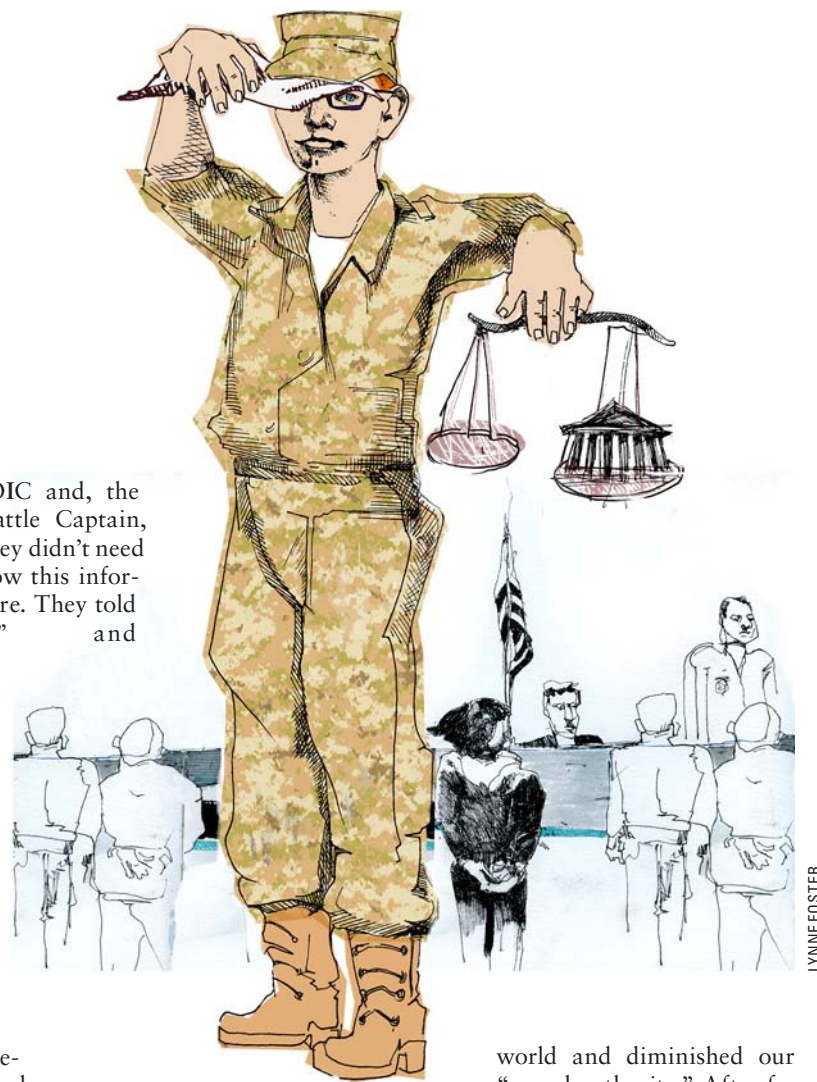
I am the type of person who likes to know how things work, and as an analyst, this means I always want to figure out the truth. Unlike other analysts in my section, or other sections within 2-10BCT, I was not satisfied with just scratching the surface, and producing "canned" or "cookie cutter" assessments. I wanted to know why something was the way it was, and what we could do to correct or mitigate a situation. I knew that if I continued to assist the Baghdad FP in identifying the political opponents of Prime Minister al-Maliki, those people would be arrested, and in the custody of this special unit of the Baghdad FP, very likely tortured and not seen again for a very long time, if ever.

Instead of assisting the special unit of the Baghdad FP, I decided to take the information and disclose it to the WLO in the hope that, before the upcoming 7 March 2010 election, they could generate immediate press on the issue, and prevent this unit of the FP from continuing to crack down on political opponents.

At the same time, I began sifting through information from the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and Joint Task Force (JTF) Guantanamo, Cuba (GTMO). The thought occurred to me, although unlikely, that I wouldn't be surprised if the individuals detained by the FP might be turned over back into U.S. custody and ending up in the custody of JTF-GTMO.

I have always been interested on the issue of the moral efficacy of our actions surrounding JTF-GTMO. On the one hand, I always understood the need to detain and interrogate individuals who might wish to harm the U.S. and our allies. I felt that was what we were trying to do at JTF-GTMO. However, the more I became educated on the topic, it seemed that we found ourselves holding an increasing number of individuals indefinitely that we believed or knew were innocent, low-level "foot soldiers" that didn't have useful intelligence and would be released if they were still held in theater.

I also recalled that in early 2009, the then-newly-elected president, Barack Obama, stated he would close JTF-GTMO and that the facility compromised our standing in the



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world and diminished our "moral authority." After familiarizing myself with the Detainee Assessment Briefs, I agreed.

## FROM: FACTS REGARDING THE UNAUTHORIZED STORAGE AND DISCLOSURE OF THE NCD DOS CABLES.

During this time, I had nothing but work to distract me. I read more of the diplomatic cables published on the Department of State (DOS) Net Centric Diplomacy (NCD) server. With my insatiable curiosity and interest in geopolitics, I became fascinated with them. I read not only cables on Iraq, but also about countries and events I found interesting. The more I read, the more I was fascinated by the way we dealt with other nations and organizations. I also began to think that they documented backdoor deals and seemingly criminal activity that didn't seem characteristic of the de facto leader of the free world.

Up to this point during the deployment, I had issues I struggled with and difficulty at work. Of the documents released, the cables are the only one I was not absolutely certain couldn't harm the U.S. I conducted research on the cables published on NCD, as well as how DOS cables work in general.

The more I read the cables, the more I came to the conclusion that this type of information should become public. I once read and used a quote on open diplomacy written after the First World War, and how the world would be a better place if states would avoid making secret pacts and deals with and against each other. I thought these cables were a prime example of the need for a more open diplomacy. Given all the DOS information I read, the fact that most of the cables were unclassified, and that all of the cables had the SIPDIS caption, I believed that the public release of these cables would not damage the U.S. However, I did believe the cables might be embarrassing, since they represented very honest opinions and statements behind the backs of other nations and organizations. In many ways, these cables are a catalog of cliques and gossip. I believed exposing this information might make some within the DOS and others unhappy.



# We Are Bradley Manning

BY CHRIS HEDGES

I was in a military courtroom at Ft. Meade in Maryland on Feb. 28 as Pfc. Bradley Manning admitted giving classified government documents to WikiLeaks. The hundreds of thousands of leaked documents exposed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as government misconduct. A statement that Manning made to the court was a powerful and moving treatise on the importance of placing conscience above personal safety, the necessity of sacrificing careers and liberty for the public good, and the moral imperative of carrying out acts of defiance. Manning will surely pay with many years — perhaps his entire life — in prison. But we too will pay. The war against Bradley Manning is a war against us all.

This trial is not simply the prosecution of a 25-year-old soldier who had the temerity to report to the outside world the indiscriminate slaughter, war crimes, torture and abuse that are carried out by our government and our occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is a concerted effort by the security and surveillance state to extinguish what is left of a free press, one that has the constitutional right to expose crimes by those in power. The lonely individuals who take personal risks so that the public can know the truth are from now on to be charged with “aiding the enemy.” All those within the system who publicly reveal facts that challenge the official narrative will be imprisoned, as was John Kiriakou, the former CIA analyst who exposed the U.S. government’s use of torture and began serving a 30-month prison term the day Manning read his statement. There is a word for

states that create these kinds of information vacuums: totalitarian.

The cowardice of *The New York Times*, *El Pais*, *Der Spiegel* and *Le Monde*, all of which used masses of the material Manning passed on to WikiLeaks and then callously turned their backs on him, is one of journalism’s greatest shames. These publications made little effort to cover Manning’s pretrial hearings, a failure that shows how bankrupt and anemic the commercial press has become. Rescuing what honor of our trade remains has been left to a handful of independent, often marginalized reporters and a small number of other individuals and groups. But if our domesticated press institutions believe that by refusing to defend or report on Manning they will escape the wrath of the security and surveillance state, they are stunningly naive. This is a war that is being played for keeps. And the goal of the state is not simply to send Manning away for life. The state is also determined to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and try him in the United States on espionage or conspiracy charges. The state hopes to cement into place systems of information that will do little more than parrot official propaganda.

The government has decided to press

ahead with all 22 charges, including aiding the enemy and espionage. It has refused to settle for Manning’s admission of guilt on 10 lesser offenses that could bring him as many as 20 years in prison. Manning’s leaks, the government insists, are tantamount to support for Al-Qaeda and international terrorism. The government

on Bin Laden’s computer and assisted al-Qaeda. This is an utterly spurious form of prosecution — as if any of us have control over the information we provide to the public and how it is used.

When he was secretary of defense, Robert Gates said a Defense Department review determined that the publication of the

Iraq War Logs and the Afghan War Diary had “not revealed any sensitive intelligence sources and methods.” In the trial, however, the government must prove only that the “disclosure could be potentially damaging to the United States” and need only provide “independent proof of at least potential harm to the national security” beyond mere security classification, writes law professor Geoffrey Stone.

Manning has done what anyone with a conscience should have done. In the courtroom he exhibited — especially given the prolonged abuse he suffered during his thousand days inside the military prison system — poise, intelligence and dignity. He appealed to the best within

us. And this is why the government fears him. America still produces heroes, some in uniform. But now we lock them up.

*An extended version of this article originally appeared at [truthdig.org](http://truthdig.org).*



**I SPY:** Bradley Manning supporters decorated a security fence with portraits of people holding “I Am Bradley Manning” signs during a rally outside Fort Meade, Md. on Feb. 26. Among those depicted is famed Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg (second from right), whose sign reads, “I Was Bradley Manning.”

will attempt to prove this point by bringing into court an anonymous witness who most likely took part in the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Pakistan. This witness will reportedly tell the court that copies of the leaked documents were found

## BEST OF WIKILEAKS

Over the course of three months in early 2010, U.S. Army Private Bradley Manning uploaded a trove of secret U.S. military and diplomatic reports to the whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks. These included what are now widely known as the “Collateral Murder” video, the Iraq War Logs, the Afghan War Diary, the Guantanamo Bay files, the Reykjavik13 cable, and the “Cablegate” collection of a quarter million State Department diplomatic cables.

Was the information that Manning leaked classified for our protection and national security, as government officials contend? Or do the revelations provide the American public with information that we should have had access to in the first place? Just what are these revelations? Below are some key facts that Manning made public.

### THERE WAS AN OFFICIAL TALLY OF CIVILIAN DEATHS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Even though the Bush and Obama administrations maintained publicly that there was no official count of civilian casualties, the Iraq and Afghanistan logs leaked by Manning showed that this claim was false. Between 2004 and 2009, the U.S. government counted a total of 109,000 deaths in Iraq, with 66,081 classified as non-combatants.

### U.S. MILITARY OFFICIALS WITHHELD INFORMATION ABOUT THE INDISCRIMINATE KILLING OF REUTERS JOURNALISTS AND INNOCENT IRAQI CIVILIANS

The “Collateral Murder” video released by WikiLeaks depicted the indiscriminate killing of over a dozen people in the Iraqi suburb of New Baghdad, including two journalists working for Reuters. The Reuters news organization was repeatedly denied in its at-

tempts to obtain the video through the Freedom of Information Act. The video, shot from an Apache helicopter gun-sight, shows U.S. soldiers firing upon a wounded Reuters photographer and his rescuers after engaging them from the air. Two young children who were present in the attempted rescue were also seriously wounded. An internal U.S. military investigation concluded that the incident was consistent with the military’s “Rules of Engagement.”

### THE OFFICIAL POLICY WAS TO IGNORE TORTURE IN IRAQ

The Iraq War Logs published by WikiLeaks revealed that thousands of reports of prisoner abuse and torture had been filed against the Iraqi Security Forces. Medical evidence detailed how prisoners had been urinated on, sexually assaulted, whipped with heavy cables across the feet, hung from ceiling hooks and suffered holes being bored into their legs with electric drills. These logs also revealed the existence of “Frago 242,” an order implemented in 2004 not to investigate allegations of abuse against the Iraqi government.

### THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD LONG BEEN FAKING ITS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR FORMER TUNISIAN PRESIDENT ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI

Tunisians had long been aware of the corruption plaguing the ruling Ben Ali family. Meanwhile, the U.S. government had shown strong public support for the Ben Ali regime, which had led to a widespread belief among Tunisians that it would be difficult to dislodge him from power. Cables leaked just months before Ben Ali’s ouster exposed the U.S. government’s private acknowledgement of the ruling family’s opulence and corruption, as well as its speculation about the danger such behavior posed to the regime’s survival. The revelation of the cables sparked mass outrage, feeding the strong public discontent that forced Ben Ali’s departure

from power and ignited the Arab Spring.

### THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION ALLOWED FORMER YEMENI PRESIDENT ALI ABDULLAH SALEH TO COVER UP A SECRET U.S. DRONE BOMBING CAMPAIGN

President Obama authorized a secret drone bombing campaign in Yemen in December 2009. A year later, WikiLeaks revealed that Saleh had agreed that his regime would “continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours.” While the total casualty figures remain unknown, drone strikes have resulted in civilian deaths and provoked widespread anger in targeted areas. According to a report by Amnesty International, one of the strikes that occurred shortly before the cable in question was written had killed 55 people, 41 of whom were classified as civilians and 21 as children. Saleh was forced from office in 2011, after months of protests and an attempt on his life.

### THE STATE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZED THE THEFT OF THE U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL’S DNA

According to the “National Humint Collection Directive,” a secret document that was signed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and published by WikiLeaks, U.S. diplomats were authorized to collect “biometric” and other sensitive information from top U.N. officials as well as U.N. representatives from other nations. The leaked documents show that “biometric data” specifically included samples of the officials’ DNA, among other forms of personally identifying information. They also ordered diplomats to collect credit card information, secure passwords and personal encryption keys.

*An earlier and extended version of this list was published by the Bradley Manning Support Network.*



# VENEZUELA AFTER CHAVEZ

## AN OUTPOURING OF EMOTION AS VOTERS PREPARE TO CHOOSE A SUCCESSOR



By Ewan Robertson

MÉRIDA, Venezuela — When Hugo Chavez's death was announced late in the afternoon on March 5, a collective sadness gripped his supporters across the nation. Shoppers stopped their tasks in the street and rushed to the nearest television. People hugged those next to them as tears ran down their faces. The grief displayed may have come as a surprise to those unfamiliar with the bond the Venezuelan president had built with the poor majority in his country. Yet as estimates of the numbers flocking to Caracas for his funeral stretched into the millions, no one could deny the popular support enjoyed by Chavez and his project, the Bolivarian Revolution.

In his 14 years as Venezuelan president, Chavez led a transformative period in the South American nation, rejecting neoliberalism and spearheading a process of nationalizations, social programs and participatory democratic practices that came to be known as "21st-century socialism." Meanwhile, he made international headlines opposing the foreign policy of the United States and its allies, while advocating Latin American integration and a "multipolar" world order.

Yet after his death, what are the prospects for Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution? Will the Chavista movement fall apart without its historic leader? And if the Revolution does continue, what are the challenges facing Venezuela beyond the next presidential election?

**CHOOSING A SUCCESSOR**

In the whirlwind of emotion created by their charismatic president's passing, Venezuelans are preparing to choose Chavez's replacement in a snap election. On April 14, they will decide whether to press ahead with the Revolution or to take a rightward turn and opt for the country's conservative opposition.

It seems very likely that the majority of Venezuelans will choose the former option and elect Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's designated successor and former vice president. Less than six months have passed since Chavez was re-elected with 55 percent of the vote, and those who supported him will almost certainly turn out again to continue his project. Venezuelans have not forgotten Chavez's final address to the nation on Dec. 8 before he left for Cuba to undergo cancer surgery. Hands slightly trembling, he said, "I want to say something, although it sounds hard ... if something should happen [to me] ... it is my firm, absolute, and irrevocable opinion that you elect Nicolas Maduro as president. I ask you this from my heart." After Chavez's death, his supporters have taken on this wish, chanting "*Chavez, te juro, mi voto por Maduro*" ("Chavez, I swear to you, my vote is for Maduro") at his funeral and at rallies around the country.

Maduro, a burly former bus driver and fierce Chavez loyalist, has made clear that his mandate will be to maintain the former president's legacy, submitting Chavez's previous campaign platform as his own. "We

are here to guarantee peace and that the Bolivarian Revolution continues its socialist course; we're fulfilling the orders of the Comandante [Chavez]," he said upon registering his presidential candidacy. Maduro has received criticism from the opposition that his working-class background and former occupation make him "unsuitable" for the job of president. However, this line of attack was turned on its head when Maduro arrived at the Electoral Council headquarters to register his candidacy driving a bus. The stunt was meant to help Maduro connect with the Chavista base, and it showed Maduro's previously unseen humor. As he emerged from his bus surrounded by cameras and supporters, the smile beneath his thick black moustache said: "Like Chavez, I am one of you."

**OPPOSITION ATTACKS**

Meanwhile, the opposition has put forward state governor Henrique Capriles, who lost to Chavez by 11 percent in October. Capriles has said that he offers a "united country" and focuses his discourse on issues perceived as difficult for the government, such as crime, inflation and the recent monetary devaluation.

The clean-cut, 40-year-old politician has emerged as the poster boy of the opposition's middle- and upper-class support. His energetic, nation-wide campaign tours have helped him move his image away from his roots; Capriles was born into one of Venezuela's richest families. As a mayor in 2002

he faced accusations of participating in the short-lived, U.S.-backed coup against the Chavez government. Indeed, when Chavez's death was announced, Capriles was on his way back to Venezuela from a visit to the United States where he was assumed to be drumming up support and funding from backers.

However, in a shift from his previously conciliatory discourse, Capriles turned his guns on Maduro and the government on the issue of Chavez's passing, accusing the government of "lying" about Chavez's death. "Who knows when the president died?" he said in a press conference, as he emerged from his bus surrounded by cameras and supporters, the smile beneath his thick black moustache said: "Like Chavez, I am one of you."

This approach is unlikely to appeal to undecided voters or Chavez supporters, especially after Chavez's daughter, Maria Gabriela, released a statement repudiating the accusations, calling the strategy "dirty" and asking Capriles to apologize. Many Chavez supporters have described the comments as "insensitive" and "political suicide."

Opposition leaders have also launched increasingly strident attacks against the National Electoral Council, which oversees balloting and has been widely praised for its work by many international observers, including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter (see story at right). This campaign to delegitimize the election comes as polling evidence suggests Maduro is headed to victory on April 14. Two late March polls by private Venezuelan firms Datanalisis and Hinterlaces gave Maduro a 14 percent and 18 percent lead, respectively, over Capriles. Thus, it appears that support for the Bolivarian project remains solid among a majority of the country's population, and that Venezuelans are set to opt for six more years of the Revolution initiated by Chavez's election in 1998.

**UNFINISHED WORK**

However, after its likely electoral victory, the Bolivarian project faces a number of challenges.

A key challenge in the coming period will be to improve the government's social policies and programs, or "missions," which have been central to the Bolivarian Revolution's popularity over the last decade. These programs — from establishing universal healthcare, to the expansion of educational opportunities and the provision of welfare — have resulted in undeniable social gains. Chief among these are halving the household poverty rate from 55 percent in 2003 to 26 percent in 2009, the near eradication of illiteracy, and the U-turn on income distribution, making Venezuela the most equal country in Latin America.

However, since 2009, poverty levels have hovered stubbornly around the 27 percent mark, reflecting the limits of existing programs. Further social gains will also depend on wider economic policy and trends.

Maduro, who is currently interim president, has recently put forward several initiatives to improve government social programs, promising to "perfect, polish and deepen" them.

Another important challenge for the Bolivarian Revolution is to advance its political goals, namely the establishment of socialism and the creation of a participatory democracy. This is a particularly thorny issue because different currents within the Bolivarian movement have different ideas of what "socialism" entails, ranging from top-down state control of certain economic sectors to forms of community and worker control over a wide range of political and economic activities.

Furthermore, the movement's radical wing warns that bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary "fifth column" forces act against grassroots initiatives and block the revolution's growth. These critical voices argue that bureaucratic and corrupt elements within the government and the ruling PSUV party must be confronted.

"A frontal battle against corruption is needed. The contradictions in the heart of the process aren't just anything. Not everyone in the government is revolutionary," said Jose Pinto, secretary-general of the Tupamaro movement, a Marxist organization that supports the Bolivarian process. Echoing the concerns of other leftist groups in the same interview, he further argued that

**FIGHT GOES ON:** Thousands of residents of the provincial capital of Merida fill the streets (far left, right) for a memorial ceremony honoring the life of former President Hugo Chavez. A Chavez supporter (center) places a flower at a shrine for the fallen president.

**IN THE RUN-UP TO THE APRIL 14 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, VENEZUELA'S RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION HAS DEVELOPED A PARALLEL POLITICAL STRATEGY: TO DISCREDIT THE VENEZUELAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM, AND WITH IT, THE LEGITIMACY OF THE RESULT**

This campaign seems to have begun in Washington on March 15 when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson said that it would be "a little difficult" for Venezuela to hold "open, fair, and transparent elections." Since then, opposition politicians, pro-opposition students, and allied private media have launched attacks at the National Electoral Council (CNE), the voting system, the timing of the election (which is mandated by the Constitution), and other aspects.

Extreme points of this campaign include an editorial by leading conservative daily *El Nacional* that called the president of the CNE "a liar" and "foolish" and the CNE itself "a team chosen and armed by [the government] to ambush the voter at every bend in the road." Meanwhile, this campaign has reached out to international opinion, with hard-liner Diego Arria writing in the *Huffington Post* that Venezuela's electoral system is "corrupt" and that the CNE is "no more than a tool of the [Venezuelan government] to maintain its power."

To anyone familiar with Venezuela's electoral system this campaign is clearly disingenuous. Venezuela's voting system, which utilizes both automated and manual security checks to prevent fraudulent voting or tabulating of results, was described by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter last October as "the best electoral system in the world." Indeed, last year the opposition asked the CNE to organize the opposition's own internal elections, calling the CNE at the time "an excellent example of democratic institutions in the country."

With Chavez's designated successor Nicolas Maduro holding a double-digit lead in the polls, the endgame appears to be to discredit Maduro's likely victory as much as possible by claiming that the election was not "fair" in the first place. Pro-government figures have alleged that the opposition is even considering pulling out of the election, or not recognizing the result afterwards. Others argue it is part of a long-term strategy to delegitimize Maduro. Whatever the opposition decides to do, its claims of an "unfair" election will find a ready ear in the world's mass media, which is accustomed to casting Venezuela's vibrant democracy in the worst possible light.

— Ewan Robertson



# YO SOY CHAVEZ

BY LISA SULLIVAN

BARQUISIMETO, Venezuela — Upon receiving the news of Hugo Chavez's death, I suddenly felt like an orphan. I immediately called my daughter in Virginia, as I knew she would understand. Several years ago when we came to live in the United States for her senior year of high school, Maia would tell me: "I miss papa so much. And, I miss Chavez. I miss hearing his voice on TV as I go to sleep. I felt so safe. As though nothing could happen to me, nothing could happen to Venezuela."

Chavez's strong and powerful arms held us to his heart like a man defending his most vulnerable child against a raging storm. He believed in us. He told us stories and sang us songs and reminded us of our unique and dignified history. He affirmed and upheld our best qualities, he told us that we were as lovely as the stars, as bright the sun, as free as the wind, as deep as the ocean and as powerful as all the forces of the universe.

And now, he is gone. When I took to the streets, like millions of other Venezuelans, to embrace strangers and cry in their arms, I found that we had grown up. In his two decades on the Venezuelan public scene and 14 years at the helm, Chavez had given the most precious gift a surrogate parent can offer: the gift of adulthood. Let there be no doubt, the Venezuelan people have come of age. Chavez is gone, but this is what resonates on every street and every plaza today: *Yo soy Chavez*. I am Chavez. I am the leader, the dreamer, the visionary, the teacher, the defender of justice, the weaver of another world that is possible.

That phrase brought me back to 2005, when I was visiting a nun on a hillside barrio in Caracas, one of those of thousands of barrios where poor Venezuelans had been relegated like unwanted trash. No water, no sewage, no schools, no streets. Her name was Begonia, and she was telling me how she had walked for hours to see Chavez pass by. When teased by other nuns for being a Chavista she said: "No, I'm not a Chavista, it's that Chavez is a 'Begonista.' He believes in all the things I have held dear for decades," she was saying, "the dignity of the poor, the right of the blind to see and those in chains to be freed."

Two days after I heard Begonia's story, Chavez himself invited me to talk to him, along with Fr. Roy Bourgeois, founder of the campaign to close the School of the Americas (SOA) in Ft. Benning, GA, a notorious training site for Latin American military officers who have gone on to carry out atrocities against their own peoples. Chavez had heard us speak on TV about the grassroots movement to close the SOA and wanted to learn more. Thus, I found myself in the presidential office with a man noted for his long discourses, who happened to be the best listener I have ever encountered. Chavez was fascinated by Roy's willingness to go to jail for his convictions and enthralled by my Venezuelan-accented Spanish and my decision to raise my kids in a barrio. He asked about each of my children's interests, and made sure that he spelled their names correctly as he signed a poster for each.

Oh, and he ordered Venezuelan troops to stop training at the SOA — defiantly opening the door for five other countries to follow suit.

That's who Chavez was. Deeply personal, celebratory, affectionate and willing to muscle his way to the farthest limb to take a stand for justice, indifferent to the consequences. That powerful muscling was what had turned me off to him at first. Having spent a lifetime taking a stand for peace, I couldn't fathom looking to a military man for leadership, much less for inspiration. It took family and neighbors to change my thinking: "Look," they would say. "Chavez is like the pilot at the helm of a boat. We're in that boat, and we're going upstream (i.e., against the neoliberal tide). Not downstream. Who do you want at the helm? A polite weakling? Or someone with muscles?"

Fourteen years later, Chavez had guided that boat so powerfully and masterfully that not only are other boats following, but his power was so great, he seems to have literally reversed the river's current. We're floating downstream, on a river of independence, sovereignty, dignity. Latin American unity, in a nation that has the smallest gap between rich and poor in South America, a nation whose college enrollment rivals several European countries, a nation whose oil now funds schools and hospitals instead of personal bank accounts in Miami.

Fourteen years ago, my barrio neighbors didn't dream of going to college, much less becoming doctors in their communities. They could barely fit in their tin or mud homes, much less envision living in a spacious three-bedroom house with indoor bathrooms that cost almost nothing. Fourteen years ago, only those on the wealthy east side of my city felt they were citizens. Now we know we all are.

After Chavez first announced his cancer almost two years ago, I awoke after another sleepless night and listened again and again to his speech. He referred to a song by our beloved singer/songwriter Ali Primera, who also died too young. Chavez repeated the lines: *Hay semerucos alla en el cerro y una canto hermoso para cantar* (there are cherry trees on the hillside and a lovely song to sing). So much beauty around us, so much to do. As someone who spends every free hour planting trees on a mountain and singing with children, that felt like a personal mandate.

Actually, I do believe this is Chavez's true mandate: Embrace your passion, and then share it with others. If you can play the guitar, teach a kid to strum. If you love basketball, shoot hoops with a teen. If you can fix a bike, teach the skill to an unemployed friend. If you have oil, share it with those who can't afford it, if you have doctors, send them where there are none. Celebrate your beauty, your history, your dignity, and honor those qualities in others — as family, as neighbors, as nations, as global citizens.

In Venezuela, our sadness is deeper than Lake Titicaca, colder than Patagonia, larger than the Amazonia and harsher than the Atacama Desert. But, we also know that together, as Venezuelans, as Americans and Caribeños, we are invincible.

That is Chavez's legacy.

*Lisa Sullivan is a former Maryknoll lay missionary who has lived in Venezuela for more than 20 years. She is the Latin American program director for the School of the Americas Watch.*



**FAREWELL:** Mario Escalona, a trumpet player and community council activist from Yaracuy, Venezuela, plays outside Hugo Chavez's March 8 funeral.

## Islands of Hope

BY DON ROJAS

Among the 60-plus country delegations in Caracas for the funeral of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez were several Caribbean nations that in recent years had relied heavily on Venezuela's energy support to survive the global economic meltdown of 2007–2008.

The ongoing crisis of global capitalism, while not as intense as it was five years ago, continues to wreak havoc on the development agendas of the fragile and vulnerable small island nations, many of which have substantial immigrant populations living in the New York City area.

The uncertainty of Venezuela's future support in the wake of Chavez's death must have weighed heavily on the minds of the Caribbean leaders who attended his funeral.

"He [Chavez] was the vital bridge between Latin America on the one hand and the Caribbean on the other," said Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of St. Vincent.

Chavez's hand-picked successor Nicolas Maduro has vowed to maintain the level of support and solidarity they received from the "Comandante." But if Maduro were to lose to his rightwing rival Henrique Capriles in Venezuela's upcoming election, Capriles would almost surely put an end to PetroCaribe, the project Chavez launched in 2005 that allows 18 countries in the Caribbean and Central America a secure energy supply through oil subsidies of between 40 to 60 percent.

In the case of Jamaica alone, the end of these subsidies would leave a \$600 million hole in the country's budget. As an indication of how appreciated Chavez's support

was in Jamaica, both Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller and the opposition Jamaica Labour Party stood united in praise for Chavez during a regular sitting of the Jamaican Parliament the day Chavez died. When the news reached Kingston the session was immediately interrupted and turned into a tribute with the prime minister, saying that "both administrations, no matter who was in power, Hugo Chavez was a friend to both. ... He assisted Jamaica in a period of need."

PetroCaribe is a part-payment-part-loan program that has funneled \$14 billion worth of oil to the 18 participating countries as of 2012. Of that, \$5.8 billion constituted long-term financing, and the monies saved from oil subsidies have allowed Jamaica and other Caribbean countries to invest hundreds of millions of PetroCaribe's dollars in projects such as building highways, upgrading school buildings and providing sanitary facilities in crowded urban areas.

In addition to PetroCaribe, the Chavez government set up the ALBA Caribe Fund (ACF) and the ALBA Food Fund (AFF) to provide development assistance to the region. In the six years up to 2012, the ACF had invested \$178.8 million on 88 projects ranging from education to water to airport construction. In nine countries the AFF had invested in 12 projects worth \$24 million.

*Don Rojas served as press secretary in the revolutionary government of Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop from 1981 to 1983. Rojas has also been an editor at the Amsterdam News and general manager of WBAI-99.5 FM.*





CHAVEZCANDANGA/FICKR

**ENTRANCE:** Nicolas Maduro, the hand-picked successor to Hugo Chavez.

## After Chavez

*Continued from page 11*

“ending bureaucracy is a fundamental task, because it drives corruption”.

Nevertheless, during the previous 14 years millions of ordinary Venezuelans have been drawn into grassroots activism, in many cases facilitated by the Chavez presidency, such as with funding and legislation to favor the formation of thousands of community councils. There is also evidence that the shock produced by Chavez’s death has encouraged some supporters to become newly-active, perceiving the need to defend the revolution against an uncertain future. In that sense, the struggle to fulfill the revolution’s political aims will depend on the ability of grassroots activists to articulate their demands and combat the revolution’s bureaucratic elements. Nicolas Maduro will also play a role in this conflict – so far he has appeared open to criticisms from below.

### CRIME AND INEFFICIENCY

The post-Chavez government will also need to effectively address certain on-going problems in Venezuela. These include violent crime and inefficiency in the state administration.

The Chavez government received much criticism for its handling of crime, with UN data citing a homicide rate in 2010 of 45.1 per 100,000, the third-highest in the Americas. The government has developed a range of policies in the last few years to combat this, such as slowly rolling out a new national police force, civilian disarmament strategies, and a new anti-crime program called Full Life Venezuela. Maduro has proposed to continue and deepen these policies, however their overall effect remains to be seen.

Combatting corruption and bureaucracy in judicial, penal and other state institutions is another complex set of problems which must be addressed. Maduro has taken up Chavez’s slogan of “efficiency or nothing” and committed to continue pro-efficiency policies designed after Chavez’s October victory, as well as to create a new “anti-corruption force”. However progress may be slow, as these phenomena existed long before Chavez came to power and will not be easily resolved.

### ‘WE ARE CONSCIOUS’

Following Chavez’s death, many would have

predicted that the Bolivarian revolution, bereft of the unifying force of its historic leader, would fall apart. However, what has been observed so far is the determination of the revolution’s supporters to work together and continue the process. That determination will likely be evidenced on April 14. A strong Maduro win would confirm the project’s majority support among the Venezuelan population and give a mandate for the continuance of the process of change underway since 1998.

In such a case, the Bolivarian revolution will need to successfully address both internal contradictions and persistent national problems in order to maintain that support and move further toward the movement’s long term political goals. Failure to do so could lead to stagnation and provide an electoral opportunity for the conservative opposition in the future.

In this regard, a common opinion expressed by Chavez supporters in recent interviews is that of Adriana Rodriguez, a community media activist in Merida city. She spoke to me at a rally to commemorate Chavez’s memory in the central plaza of the colonial town. Thousands of red-clad activists were roaring “Chavez lives, the fight goes on!”, while well-wishers carefully laid flowers beside a picture of Chavez. Above towered a statue of Simon Bolivar, Venezuela’s 19th century independence hero whose example so-influenced Chavez’s life. Looking at the crowd, Adriana said that when Chavez died, “It was a hard blow; I cried uncontrollably for days, it was like losing a family member”. However, rather than being disillusioned, she said she felt that “we are organized and we are conscious of the historic role that we have: to carry forward this process, which now goes beyond Venezuela”.

With millions of Venezuelans sharing this sentiment, it feels a little premature to describe a post-Chavez Venezuela just yet. Rather, the Comandante’s thought and legacy will continue shaping the country and the wider region for some time into the future.

*Ewan Robertson lives in Mérida, Venezuela, and is a staff writer for Venezuelanalysis.com. He holds a postgraduate degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Aberdeen, and is currently researching Venezuela’s Community Medicine program.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**WED, APRIL 10 • 7:30pm**

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**WED, APRIL 17 • 7:30pm**

BOOK TALK

Down the Up Escalator: How the 99 Percent Live in the Great Recession

Discussion with Barbara Garson

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

**THUR, APRIL 25 • 7:30pm**

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Sean Sweeney, Nancy Romer, Gerardo Renique

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# Touched by an Angel

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

It comes out of the dark. Memories like steam leave the person confused, ashamed and scared. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse won't know for years what happened to their bodies. The hot hands of the pedophile are folded into the depths of forgetting until some jarring moment, some odd connection opens a passageway to daylight. When the pedophile's face becomes visible in the mind, the next shock is that it's someone they know.

And what if that face is supposed to be the face of God? It is a learned fear and respect for figures of authority that creates silent victims of abuse. Their mute suffering deepens to the degree that the sexual predator has social status, which is why for decades, pedophile priests were invisible: above them was the blinding light of God. It has only been in the past two decades that the mystique of the Catholic Church has been eroded enough for everyone to see the shifty shuffling of pedophiles from one parish to another by church leaders in Rome, including former Pope Benedict Ratzinger.

The Catholic Church, with its 1.2 billion followers, is the largest Christian denomination in the world. It's a top-down hierarchy: standing at the summit is the Pope, an elderly man who is God's representative on earth; next are the dioceses, which are led

by a bishop; below them are the parishes, which are overseen by priests, deacons or lay ministers. Ornate Catholic churches can be seen in every country, sometimes nestled between tall modern skyscrapers, sometimes in the tangled foliage of the country. For hundreds of years, millions of people have gone through those doors in search of salvation and now we learn, many have emerged scarred with guilt and shame.

The reported numbers on child sex abuse are inevitably too low. Many victims are too ashamed to speak. Many are silenced when they do. And some kill themselves because the pain is too great to endure. Only a few victims fight back. Only 3,000 lawsuits have been filed against the church. According to bishopaccountability.org, U.S. bishops received allegations of abuse directed at about 6,115 priests from 1950 to 2011, and they calculated about 16,324 victims or about three per priest. Based on a report by the *Dallas Morning News*, at least two-thirds of U.S. bishops kept priests accused of pedophilia serving in the ministry and moved them to new assignments.

But why this culture of sexual predation? Maybe it is because the first victim of monotheistic religion is the body itself. Clerical celibacy, the idea that one must sacrifice bodily desires to be closer to God, comes from the separation of the body and the soul that is at the core of church doctrine. The

temptations of the flesh are seen as dangerous diversions. The body is a vehicle for the transmission of life, a sacred essence that comes from the Lord, and life must be valued above all. Masturbation and contraception are wrong because they waste the "seed." Abortion is wrong because it kills life. Sex outside of marriage and not for procreation is wrong. The only right way to live one's sexuality is to have unprotected sex within marriage.

If you intend to serve God within the church, you must renounce even sex within marriage to be absolutely dedicated to the divine messages God whispers into the world. The body is a swamp of desire that one can escape by climbing the glowing steps of prayer. And these social ideals, set in the early centuries of Christianity, are a giant anchor embedded in the past that is being stretched to snapping as history moves forward.

So here's the picture: the Catholic Church, a global institution of 1.2 billion people, a network of churches that span the world, has been led by a cabal of chaste men who preach against bodily desires to the millions of people who pour through the pews. And yet in the dark quiet rectories, some of these men have, like cheetahs in *National Geographic* shows, isolated young, weak or helpless believers to prey upon and feed their hunger for sex and power. The others

who are not targeted leave the church, erotically mangled as they vacillate between their desires and the ideas they are taught come from God.

Child sexual abuse is the most extreme form of the violence the church does to the erotic body. It is one pole on a spectrum that includes unwanted pregnancy, unequal power relationships between men and women, guilt at masturbation, self-destructive rebellion against those very religious rules or the "Catholic girl gone bad" stereotype and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases because of the prohibition on contraception.

The only protection the church has is people's habitual, learned subservience to power. Once that breaks, so will its hold on human history. So let's imagine the new Pope Francis at the Vatican. He recently held his first homily saying, "Let us protect Christ in our lives, so we can protect others." Thousands of Catholics sat in hot sunlight and fanned their faces. The Pope paused as he shuffled his pages, so imagine in that moment, a hundred people in audience standing up and unfolding a banner that reads, "I was raped by a priest and the church protected him." Imagine reporters rushing the barricades, aiming cameras at the protesters as burly security men plow through the seats to wrestle them down.



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# Abusing the Faithful

## NEW POPE CAN'T WASH AWAY THE CHURCH'S SORDID SEX SCANDALS

The following testimonies are taken from the recently released clergy files of the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, which made public the personnel records of priests accused of sexually abusing children on Jan. 31. The court-ordered release of the 12,000 documents came from the largest archdiocese in the nation and was accompanied by the removal of a top clergyman, Cardinal Roger Mahoney, who had been linked to efforts to conceal the abuse. In March, Cardinal Mahoney traveled to Rome to participate in the election of the new pope.

FROM THE FILES:

"In March of 1993 I began to see a picture of a room inside my head. It would pop into my thoughts randomly and frequently...Each time the room popped into my head I tried to find a quiet place to allow the experience to unfold. Most of the time, I would just lay on the floor in the fetal position crying, never knowing why. Eventually the room began to invade my meditation and my sleep. I seemed to be particularly afraid of a chair in the room. Again, I did not know why. I had begun to journal after these experiences. My journal entry on June 19, 1993 reads, 'Can't sit in that chair, Fr. Joe touches me in that chair.' After I wrote it I said to myself, 'why did I just write that?'

"On June 24, 1993 I was unable to sleep. The library was haunting me. I gave in out of sheer frustration. Again my body began to shake, I was overcome with extreme fear and a sense of danger. Then I began to feel my vagina being penetrated over and over again. The picture became clear, it was Father Joe and I was sitting in his lap. It was his fingers that I was feeling...I was in shock. How could I forget something this serious? It was unbelievable. It must be a mistake."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND JOSEPH ALZUGARAY

"Father Barmasse acknowledged that an incident had occurred in 1983...He explained that he had invited a group of altar servers to a movie but they all canceled except one boy. Instead of going out, Father Barmasse invited the boy to watch a video in the rectory. The movie was *Jaws*. Father Barmasse reported that that while they were watching the movie, the boy commented that when his family watched videos at home they gave each other massages. Father Barmasse then asked the boy if he wanted a massage and the boy said yes. The youngster was about 12 years old. He lay on his stomach and Father Barmasse lifted up his shirt to massage his shoulders and back. He then undid the boy's jeans and pulled them down in order to massage the boy's legs."

— REPORT BY STAFF PSYCHIATRIST AT THE ST. LUKE INSTITUTE IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND KEVIN BARMASSE

"Took notes for ½ hour — stretched and he

offered to give me a backrub. Tour of rectory — up to his room — bear hug. Then he kissed me and forced his tongue in my mouth. He saw I was afraid; sat me down, gave me a soda; then laid me on the sofa — began kissing me with his tongue, put his hand on my crotch, rubbing me to erection, asked me to take down my pants. Then I said, 'I have to go.' Offered to take me back to St. Luke's, my Episcopal church...on the way to St. Luke's in the car, he begged me not to tell anyone — that it would ruin him and nobody would believe me anyway. I felt ashamed; was very scared and didn't think anyone would believe me. I have carried it since then."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND LELAND BOYER

"Other instances happened at the Botanical Gardens in Santa Barbara. We would go there to take walks and he would reach out and hold my hand as we were walking. At some point during the walk he would find a secluded spot and sit me down on the ground or bench or one time it was a rock. He would then begin kissing me, always with his tongue all over the place in my mouth. He would begin touching me all over my body and the touching progressed to where he would unbutton or take off my shirt and fondle and kiss and suck on my breasts for lengthy periods of time. His hands would also be all over the rest of my body."

"One time he took me to the beach to take my picture. After he took the picture he began molesting me. He was lying on top of me rubbing himself against me until he ejaculated. When he was finished he stood up and I noticed that he had a big wet spot on the front of his pants. He just untucked his shirt. On that day my parents had invited him to my house for dinner. He just drove me there with his shirt untucked and sat at our dinner table with his pants still wet from the molestation. I was terrified."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND MICHAEL S. TERRA

"Father was friendly, took us to the movies a lot. I'd see him almost every day on the playground at St. Barnabas. He'd take several of us to movies. In time, he would take only me. Toward the end of 7th grade, he started talking to me after a movie in his car. He said 'You are a lot more to me than a friend.' He reached over and put his hand on my lap, asked me if that was all right. I said I was uncomfortable. He said, 'Sorry, I won't do that again.' A week later, he began giving me gifts, tried it again. He kept pursuing me, asked me to movies a lot. People really liked Father Llanos, he sang well, changed the Mass around in the way people liked."

"When he would approach me at school, he would say, 'What's wrong, there's nothing wrong with this, nothing wrong with the way I feel about you.' He'd grab my butt from behind, harassed me a lot; I was more scared than anything else. Kept giving me gifts and calling up. He'd pull my hand over his groin many times."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND THEODORE LLANOS

"The year 1947. I was 7 years old — just a little child. You were assisting at St. Alphonsus parish in East Los Angeles. One day I was in the school cafeteria, adjoining the parish auditorium. My mother was visiting with the lunchroom ladies. You knew my mother well. She drove the school bus and did some secretarial work in the rectory. Perhaps your relationship with her brought you into contact with me...You were there that day and somehow managed to get me into the auditorium. The auditorium was dark. Rows and rows of chairs were set up. A movie projector was in place. You put the projector on. Then you sat me on your lap, held me, and began to sexually abuse me. You placed your fingers in my vagina. It seemed as if at least fifteen minutes passed before you were finished with me. I remember the moment you left me standing alone as you went on your way. I was confused,

alone and afraid. I locked myself in the parish hall bathroom. I never told anyone. I couldn't."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND GEORGE RUCKER

"Several years ago my sister was molested, possibly raped by a Fr. Joseph D. Pina, pastor of St. Alphonsus Church...So why do I write? Well its because after all these years I have had much time to reflect about the situation. Much anger, fear, and frustration has been part of me and my family. None of us have been able to completely enjoy our lives. A deep wedge has been hammered into my family, driving each other away because of this event. Also though the faith my sisters had by this time began to deteriorate, the things Fr. Joe Pina did greatly contributed for them to further themselves from the Church."

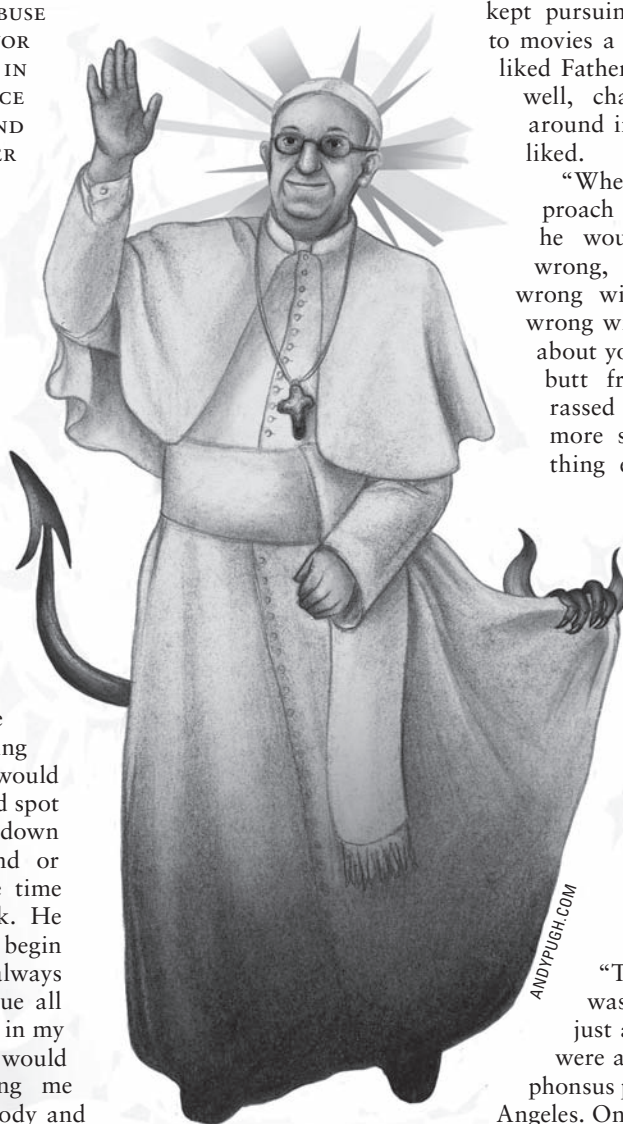
So my question is why did the church do nothing to remedy this? If Fr. Pina had reported it why did Your office remain quiet when you had a moral obligation to address this issue. Nothing really has been done to Fr. Joe, other than getting psychological help but what about getting help for my sister and my family? Several times my sister has vocalized getting help but due to her financial situation she has not been able to get long term help. Mr. Archbishop it's not just the money but the feeling of isolation and lack of response from a church I believed in. Even my father's, who I believe is an extremely devoted my man, faith has been shook up violently. All I want is for the Church to deal with this situation honestly."

— LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND JOSEPH PINA FROM THE BROTHER OF A SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR

"I warned you twenty four years ago to stay away from me. Remember that phone call?...Let me refresh your memory. Remember the dinners at the Azteca Restaurant? Remember ordering drinks for both of us? Remember kissing me on the lips and telling me that it wasn't unusual behavior with men in European cultures? Remember asking me about how often I masturbated? Remember telling me that you also masturbated? Remember the foreign film that we saw together in Santa Monica that you insisted I see? Remember the homosexual sex scenes? Remember how interested you were in my sex life with my girlfriend? Remember telling me that I shouldn't tell anybody else what we talk about? That they might not understand? Remember the Cognac we drank together at your residence? Remember asking to see the birthmark on my penis? Remember, remember, remember!"

"Father Cronin, my memory is very clear."

— SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN REFERENCE TO REVEREND SEAN CRONIN





UFT Elections

Continued from page 5

closings. When the CTU launched a week-long strike last September, parents, students and community members poured into the streets to show their support for the teachers forcing Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to settle a favorable contract with the union.

However, circumstances are different in the two cities.

In New York, the legacy of the racially-

charged 1968 teachers strike carried out across the city by the UFT to squash an experiment with community control of schools in the predominantly African-American neighborhood of Ocean Hill-Brownsville still lingers over the union 45 years later like an unacknowledged curse.

In Chicago, the CTU’s previous incumbents were poorly organized whereas the UFT has been controlled by the Unity Caucus for half a century.

“There is a mass machine that has to be

battled at the school level and the district level,” said Norm Scott, a retired teacher and education blogger who is active in MORE.

Despite all its top-down power, the UFT has little impact in the daily life of many of the city’s 1,700 public schools. With MORE’s chances of victory in this election almost nil, organizers see this year’s campaign as an opportunity to build a school-level network of supporters that can continue to grow and win more chapter elections

in 2015 and pose a stronger challenge in the next union-wide elections in 2016. Their success will be determined to a large extent by their ability to connect with and move union members who do not already self-identify as leftists.

“We’re in this for the long haul,” Cavanaugh said. “We’ll be in a much stronger place in three years.”

For more information, see [morecaucus.org](http://morecaucus.org) or [ednotesonline.blogspot.com](http://ednotesonline.blogspot.com).

War Without End

Continued from page 7

ended, when we could exhale a bit, realizing we had all survived, I was eager to take Miladah and Zainab outside. I wanted them to feel the sun’s warmth, but first I headed over to their mother, wanting to know if she felt it was all right for me to step out with her children.

She was seated in the hotel lobby, watching the scene outside. U.S. Marines were uncurling large bales of barbed wire to set up a checkpoint immediately outside our hotel. Beige military jeeps, armored personnel carriers, tanks and Humvees lined the streets in every direction. Tears streamed down Umm Miladah’s face. “Never before did I think that this would happen to my country,” she said. “And I feel very sad. And this sadness, I think it will never go away.”

She was a tragic prophet.

The war had just ended for those killed during the “Shock and Awe” bombing and invasion, and it was to abruptly end for many thousands killed in the ensuing years of military occupation and civil war. But it won’t end for the survivors.

Consequences of war continue for the 2.2 million people who have been displaced by bombing and chaos, whose livelihoods are irreparably destroyed, and who have become refugees in other countries, separated from loved ones and unlikely to ever reclaim the homes and communities from which they had to flee hastily. Within Iraq, an estimated 2.8 million internally displaced people live, according to Refugees International, “in constant fear, with limited access to shelter, food and basic services.”

The war also hasn’t ended for people who are survivors of torture or for those who fol-

lowed orders and became torturers.

Nor has it ended for the multiple generations of U.S. taxpayers who will continue paying for a war that economists Linda Bilmes and Joseph Stiglitz have, so far, priced at \$4 trillion.

For Bradley Manning — whose bravery exposed criminal actions on the part of U.S. warlords complicit in torture, death squads and executions — the war most certainly isn’t over. He lives as an isolated war hero and whistleblower, facing decades or perhaps life in prison.

The war may never end for veterans who harbor physical and emotional wounds. On March 19, on the 10th anniversary of the invasion, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, joined by the Center for Constitutional Rights and other activist groups, gathered in front of the White House to launch an initiative claiming their right to

heal. Rightfully, they’re calling for health care, accountability and reparations, and just as rightfully, they’re calling for our support.

A civilized country would heed their call. A civilized country would demand heartfelt reparations to the people of Iraq and cease to interfere in their internal affairs. It would secure freedom and official praise for whistleblowers like Bradley Manning, and liberate itself from subservience to warlords and war profiteers. Gandhi was once asked, “What do you think of western civilization?” And famously, he answered, “I think it would be a good idea.”

This article originally appeared on [Waging-Nonviolence.org](http://Waging-Nonviolence.org).

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# Photography as Remedy

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMEL SHABAZZ

BY CAMILLE WANLISS ORTIZ

*Jamel Shabazz, widely known for his documentation of urban street style during the rise of hip-hop in the mid-1970s to early 1980s, has an oeuvre filled with compositional and visual acuity that showcases his versatility as an artist. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Shabazz set his viewfinder on the youth living in and around his neighborhood, using photography not only as an instrument to inspire but as “visual medicine” for the ills plaguing their community.*

*Shabazz’s work is currently the focus of several local and international exhibitions, including “Engines of War” at Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert Gallery in Chelsea, “REPRESENT” at Gallery Cultural Speech in Amsterdam and “Best Friends” at Le Case D’Arte Gallery in Milan.*

*Camille Wanliss Ortiz met with the celebrated photographer and social activist to discuss his career, which has spanned more than 30 years.*

**CAMILLE WANLISS ORTIZ:** *Who were your influences and what was it about their work that inspired you, at age 15, to get behind the lens?*

**JAMEL SHABAZZ:** The person that had the greatest influence on my life was my father, who was trained as a photographer. As a young child I found great pleasure in viewing hundreds of his intriguing black and white images. My father had a very large library in our home and one of the books that captured my imagination was a paperback book called *Black in White America* by documentary photographer Leonard Freed. This book would awaken me to not only black and white photography, but segregation in America. The very first image in this book is of two uniformed American soldiers, one black and the other white, on post at the Berlin Wall during the early 1960s. That image alone was very impactful and each image that would follow fascinated me. The knowledge I gained from this book would later manifest itself in so many images I would create in my later years. As I look at my work now, there are so many similarities.

**CWO:** *You were also a corrections officer for 20 years. How did this impact you or your photography?*

**JS:** Being a photographer while working in the Department of Corrections provided me with a great way to decompress from the misery I was encountering on a daily basis. I carried my camera with me every single day, and I would shoot both before and after work. This

process allowed me to see another side of life, counterbalancing the violence and hate that would encompass the majority of my eight-and-a-half-hour workday. To maintain my equilibrium and sanity, I found it very necessary to record images that reflected positivity and hope. So I trained my lens on families, students and everyday people just striving to get by. There were also plenty of times where I would document the other side, a reality I could not escape from — prostitution, poverty and despair. In the process of making those images I would use them as teaching tools to enlighten many young people to the world around them.

**CWO:** *How did you use your camera as a tool to mentor and encourage the youth you documented?*

**JS:** The camera allowed me to photograph them and show them that I had a genuine interest in their lives. We would discuss the importance of education, relationships, diet and the need to have goals. I would show them my work and explain my process, followed by a group shoot or portrait, both for my records and as a gift to them upon my return. This method helped me



*The Youth, Red Hook Houses, South Brooklyn, 1980. ©Jamel Shabazz. Courtesy the artist.*

to build trust among young people. Another idea I would infuse in the conversation was their consideration of photography as a possible career option. Whenever possible I would show them the functions of the camera and instruct them on how to take photos. Years later I would find out that quite a few of my subjects would become photographers.

**CWO:** *It takes a bit of foresight to capture images that hold relevance years later. Did you know at the time that you were documenting a piece of history?*

**JS:** Since first picking up my camera, I knew I was recording a piece of history, but it was just my personal visual diary at the time and nothing more.



Jamel Shabazz. Courtesy the artist.

*the past three decades?*

**JS:** My first camera was a Kodak Instamatic 110. The majority of images I made in the 1980s were all shot with a Canon AE1 Program. I started using the Contax G2 during the early 2000s. In 2005, I began using a digital SLR camera and I immediately fell in love with digital photography. One of the joys for me was being in a position to share with my subjects a photograph I had just taken of them. What a joy it was to see their instant smile of approval upon viewing the image on my screen. Another great benefit about this digital age is that I can upload and email images out to my subjects without the hassle of having to process work and mail them through the postal service.

**CWO:** *When you view your images, what memories do they bring back to you?*

**JS:** When I look back, specifically at the images from the 1980s, I cannot help but think about all the lives that were lost to drugs and senseless violence. Sadly, so many of

the faces in my books and personal albums are no longer here and most of them never made it past the age of 25. Crack cocaine was one of the main contributing factors for these premature deaths, so when I look back I am not so much looking at the fashion or style, I am looking at a people who are very close to my heart.

**CWO:** *What is next for you?*

**JS:** Presently, I am archiving my vast collection of images and looking into ways to have my various bodies of work in institutions of higher learning. In addition, I am exploring self-publishing a series of limited-edition books all based on my visual journey. My newly released book entitled *REPRESENT* reflects this new endeavor.

*“REPRESENT” is on view at Gallery Cultural Speech through April 13; “Best Friends” is on view at Le Case D’Arte Gallery from through April 14; and “Engines of War” will be on view at Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert Gallery through May 4.*



# ‘Redistribute That Money’

*Down the Up Escalator: How the 99% Lives in the Great Recession*

AUTHOR: BARBARA GARSON (DOUBLE-DAY, 2013)

**U**nemployed office workers who gather in Central Park to pray to a pagan god of wealth and prosperity. Homeowners who walk away from their mortgages. Older workers threatened with losing their pensions. Bankers desperately looking for businesses to loan their money to. In her latest book, *Down the Up Escalator: How the 99% Live in the Great Recession*, Barbara Garson journeys through the lives of people struggling against the economic riptides of the early 21st Century. More than telling a good story, though, Garson makes a larger point about the times we live in.

**JOHN TARLETON:** What inspired you to write this book? What did you want to bring to the conversation?

**BARBARA GARSON:** I hoped to show through the lives of the people I interviewed that when the 1% have all the wealth, it's not just that it's mean or it's unfair, but that capitalism stops itself when all the money gets in fewer and fewer hands. We can't go on lending money to people to buy what they produce. It's obviously a Ponzi scheme. It can't go on forever.

**JT:** Yet, people in this country tend to blame the individual, not the system.

**BG:** That's true. People my age see their kids end up in a financial mess and they think they aren't saving, aren't making the right choices. In fact, these young people did what they were told — invest in their education, buy a starter home, etc. — and the deck is totally stacked against them. Someone I sent the book to said, “Oh, I've been too hard on my kids. I didn't realize how much worse things have become.”

Hopefully, this book will open more people's eyes like that.

**JT:** How do things look in the rest of the country outside New York City?

**BG:** Considerably worse. The first industry to recover was finance, which is the cornerstone of New York's economy. In other parts of the country, the housing bubble burst much harder. And, unemployment rates are higher and people remain out of work for longer periods of time.

What's coming to New York are temp jobs that take the place of real jobs. They are moving up the economic ladder and a lot of white collar jobs such as computer programming, bookkeeping, editing and graphics are becoming temp work. The insecurity is as great here, but the unemployment certainly is not as desperate.

**JT:** Meanwhile in Washington, D.C. the focus remains on deficit reduction and budget cuts even though the federal government can borrow money at practically 0% interest.

**BG:** I can't believe it! Since the 1930s it's been understood that the way to get out of a recession is to make up for the shortage in private spending with increased government spending — that you have to put spending power back in ordinary people's hands. I shouldn't have to waste my time explaining what used to be a middle-of-the road position. As a socialist, I should be saying, “Now that we've redistributed a little wealth, let's take democratic control of it.”

**JT:** One of the central characters in your book is someone you first met as a young activist more than 40 years ago and then lost track of.

**BG:** I first met Duane in 1970 when I was working at a GI coffee house in Tacoma, Washington. He was back from Vietnam where his company had joked about refusing to follow

orders. He was great with his hands and became a mechanic. He worked hard and upgraded his skills to keep up with the demands of the job market and still experienced a 40-year stagnation and decline in wages before he died in 2007 just before the recession. His adult children are struggling even more to keep their heads above water as they raise their own children.

**JT:** What lies ahead for the 99% in the coming years if nothing is done to address wealth inequality?

**BG:** We will be a poorer, more ragged population with much more frequent recessions because people won't have enough to buy what they produce. There was a time when it always seemed to be the left saying, “America is going downhill, the empire is over.” And now it's as if the capitalist class is saying, “Oh, this country is finished. I'm investing abroad, I'm hiring abroad, I'm selling abroad.” They don't even think, ‘Well we can build back up again.’ They're pulling out and they don't care if we just go down and down.

**JT:** What can and should be done? Be as radical as you like.

**BG:** At the very least, redistribute that money. Get us back to the point we were in the years after World War II where working people were getting a larger share of the wealth created by increases in productivity. At the very most, change from capitalism to socialism so people can collectively run industries and pay themselves more.

**JT:** What were your thoughts on Occupy Wall Street when it erupted a couple of miles from where you live?

**BG:** I loved the spirit of it. I felt just like I felt in the '60s. But I saw us making the same mistakes we made in the '60s when we feared being co-opted or having strong leaders. The '60s was a lot bigger than Occupy



FRANK LEONARD

Barbara Garson

and we didn't even leave a daily, weekly or monthly newspaper or an organized student union. It's very difficult to strike the balance between building something that could speak for us collectively and not becoming a traditional organization that could be co-opted.

**JT:** The financial freedom you experienced as a young radical in the '60s underscores how much things have changed for the 99% in the decades since.

**BG:** I went to the University of California when there was free tuition and fees were under \$125 a semester. I didn't have any student debt. Anytime you wanted a job, you could get it. If you wanted a teaching job, that was no problem. If you just wanted to do movement stuff, be in a collective, you could always earn enough money to rent a place.

I didn't realize how easy it was, that I was living in an unusual time. I always felt that things would get better and better.

In the first books I wrote in the

'60s, we were all talking about whether we should shorten hours or do more craft work as if we had command of the economy. The autoworkers who went on strike in 1972 at the Lordstown, Ohio GM plant spoke of humanizing their work and how to personalize the cars they built on the assembly line. Nowadays people don't talk about humanizing work, they talk about finding work.

**JT:** Do you still have hope?

**BG:** It's worth playing a long shot when it's your only chance. These guys will bring down the whole planet if it makes them a profit. They'll do anything. It would be an actual crime against shareholders for an executive to say, “I'm not going to maximize profit and increase shareholder value because I'm concerned about the planet.” So that system has to go.

Barbara Garson will discuss *Down the Up Escalator* at the *Brecht Forum* on April 17 at 7:30pm.

Here are three off-off Broadway plays being staged in April that find original ways to approach difficult themes like race, immigration and worker alienation. Look for more *Indy* theater coverage in future issues.

## GOLDOR \$ MYTHYKA: A HERO IS BORN

by Lynn Rosen  
directed by Shana Gold  
presented by New Georges

April 8–27  
Wed–Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm; Mon, 7pm  
Tickets: \$25/\$35 premium, available via SmartTix (smarttix.com) or at 212-868-4444

The New Ohio  
154 Christopher Street, between Greenwich & Washington, Manhattan

Based on the true story of a young couple dubbed the “Goth Bonnie & Clyde” for robbing \$7.4 million from an armored car company in OH, *Goldor \$ Mythyka* follows a young couple who escape their mundane existence through games of Dungeons & Dragons — until reality and fantasy collide. “A recessionary tale” of escapism, vengeance, and “the elusive American dream.”  
*More info at newgeorges.org*

## HONKY

by Greg Kalleres  
directed by Luke Harlan

Through April 14  
Tickets: \$40, available via SmartTix (smarttix.com) or at 212-868-4444

Urban Stages  
259 W. 30th Street, Manhattan

A darkly comic look at the murky issue of race, *Honky* follows an ad-man feeling responsible for the death of a teen after his basketball-shoe commercial glorifies street violence, his oblivious fiancé, a shoe designer worried about selling out the “black kid's shoe,” and the company executive exploiting stereotypes to make a buck. Meanwhile, a new pill on the market guarantees it'll cure racism...

*More info at urbanstages.org*

## LA RUTA

by Ed Cardona, Jr.  
directed by Tamilla Woodard

April 10–May 12  
Tickets: \$25, available via Brown Paper Tickets (brownpapertickets.com)

*La Ruta* follows the path (“la ruta”) and fates of several undocumented immigrants and their smugglers from the Mexican border into the U.S. Audience members are physically along for the journey, immersed in the narrative while seated alongside the characters in an actual semi truck.

*Tickets, showtimes, and locations available at theworkingtheater.org*

*Listings presented by Robert Gonyo, producer of the off-off-Broadway theatre podcast Go See a Show! (goseeshowpodcast.com)*



# Raising Hell and Dust in the Desert

*Raising Expectations (And Raising Hell)*  
By JANE McALEVEY  
VERSO BOOKS, 2012

The uphill climb for American organized labor to regain its economic clout and political power is akin to scaling Mount Kilimanjaro during a blizzard. Major countervailing winds — epitomized by the legal system that makes it easy for corporations to fire employees interested in forming unions and turn to multi-million dollar law firms to crush worker militancy — make the survival of labor unions seem near impossible. However, as former labor organizer Jane McAlevey writes in *Raising Expectations (And Raising Hell)*, some of organized labor's struggles spring from the labor movement itself, namely in the form of internecine union wars and poor strategic vision.

*Raising Expectations* is both uplifting and depressing — a great encapsulation of the labor movement — told through the lens of McAlevey's experience as a labor organizer with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). McAlevey's personal story is indicative of the experience of many activists who become labor organizers. She got her start as an environmental activist with the Earth Island Institute, and made her first foray into labor organizing in 1998 when she was recruited to join the AFL-CIO's Stamford Organizing Project. Though short-lived, the project made inroads in establishing the "whole worker organizing approach," which viewed employees' relationships outside of the workplace as the linchpin that determined the success of unionizing campaigns.

Through her work in Stamford, Conn., McAlevey used community organizing tactics straight from Saul Alinsky's playbook, like reaching out to churches and local leaders and pressuring politicians to yield to workers' demands. These techniques paved the way for union victories, and through these efforts McAlevey caught the attention of SEIU's top brass. As an energetic, idealistic organizer at the beginning of her career, she was a perfect fit for SEIU's intensive organizing drives. McAlevey's brief but fiery seven-year tenure at SEIU dovetailed with one of rockiest periods in President Andy Stern's leadership. This period was marked by SEIU brokering neutrality agreements with large



BETH WHITNEY

healthcare corporations, local union takeovers and jurisdictional disputes with the California Nurses Association (CNA), an industry rival.

## FIGHTS IN THE VEGAS LIGHTS

In the midst of all of this dysfunction, Stern eyed SEIU Vegas Local 1107 as an under-performing and disorganized entity and hand-picked McAlevey (who earned the nickname "Hurricane Jane") to get the public sector local's house in order. While she described Vegas as a "phony city built on gambling and prostitution" and she disliked the local's leadership (who she described as a "rat's nest") McAlevey quickly harnessed local labor to take on the leadership of the Universal Health Services (UHS) organizing campaign to make inroads in the fight for hospital workers' rights.

Throughout the book, McAlevey uses a keen rhetorical device by periodically "phoning" her mentor, long-time SEIU 1199 leader Jerry Brown, for advice, which keeps the book moving and also allows for transitions. Reading McAlevey's hospital organizing tales and getting a first-hand look at the success of these campaigns makes you wish you were fighting alongside her. By 2004, Local 1107's threat of strikes became big news in Las Vegas and UHS buckled to good contracts and better patient care.

In general, companies like UHS fight unionization campaigns tooth and nail. In a bruising hospital contract drive at Desert Springs Hospital (a subsidiary of UHS) the reader gets an insider's look at how anti-union campaigns evolve. During the union drive, company higher-ups called in union avoidance firms that held mandatory "captive audience meetings" to warn workers against unionization and directed frontline managers to conduct one-on-one meetings with employees to drive the message home. One of those consultants was Jose Salgado, who routinely menaced pro-union employees. But Salgado's reign of intimidation came to a halt when McAlevey caught wind that he had previously worked as a gunrunner and she

launched a "No Way Jose" sticker action. As McAlevey writes, "In a matter of hours Jose's power over them was in the hospital's toxic refuse bins."

However, McAlevey's string of successes runs aground when she tries to defeat entrenched Local 1107 leadership through elections. McAlevey's bid to replace incumbent union board members received Stern's backing, but his use of union funds to support her slate of candidates (and McAlevey's naiveté or culpability), was a blatant violation of labor law that cost her dearly. In the end, both McAlevey and her rivals were forced out of SEIU, and Local 1107 was ill-equipped to cope with the one-two punch of the CNA recruiting formerly SEIU nurses and SEIU's inability to expand the facilities in which they organized, due to SEIU's neutrality agreements.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS STAYS IN VEGAS

While McAlevey has taken a break from organizing and is now a Ph.D. candidate in the sociology program at the CUNY Graduate Center, she's still a lightning rod in the labor movement. Labor writer Steve Early dubbed McAlevey "less the 'left-wing troublemaker,' she claims to be, and more of a progressive prima donna." Last spring, Early penned a searing critique of SEIU and other labor unions, *Civil Wars in U.S. Labor: Birth of a New Workers' Movement or Death Throes of the Old?*, which singles out McAlevey's time with SEIU Local 1107 as an example of how unions should not be run.

McAlevey's detractors should still laud her obvious talents as an innovative organizer who was adept at strategic campaigning, even if SEIU was simultaneously capable of directing its considerable resources to fighting the good fight against corporations while also lapsing into debilitating dysfunction.

— BENNETT BAUMER

*Bennett Baumer is a former SEIU organizer.*

# UNTIL MY FREEDOM HAS COME

"Here is a book that rips through the falsehoods and false noise that has deepened the silence about Kashmir. It shows moral courage and intellectual integrity. Here, finally, Kashmiris tell their own stories, analyse their own situation and dream their own dreams. And they do it bravely and beautifully."

—Arundhati Roy



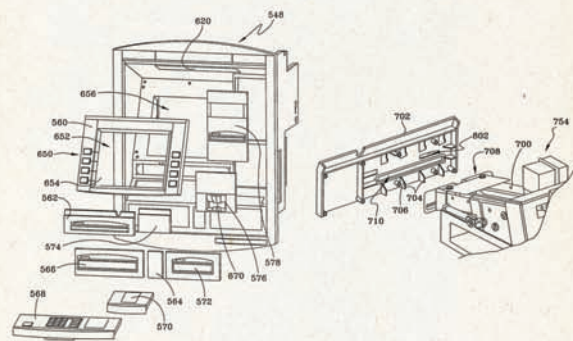
The pieces in this volume voice the rage and helplessness sweeping through the Kashmir Valley, while also offering rare insights into the lives of those caught in the crossfire. With contributions from journalists, academics and artists, this book is a timely collection of some of the most exciting writing that has recently emerged from within Kashmir, and about it.

The New Intifada in Kashmir

Edited by Sanjay Kak

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# Disassembly Required



A FIELD GUIDE TO ACTUALLY EXISTING CAPITALISM

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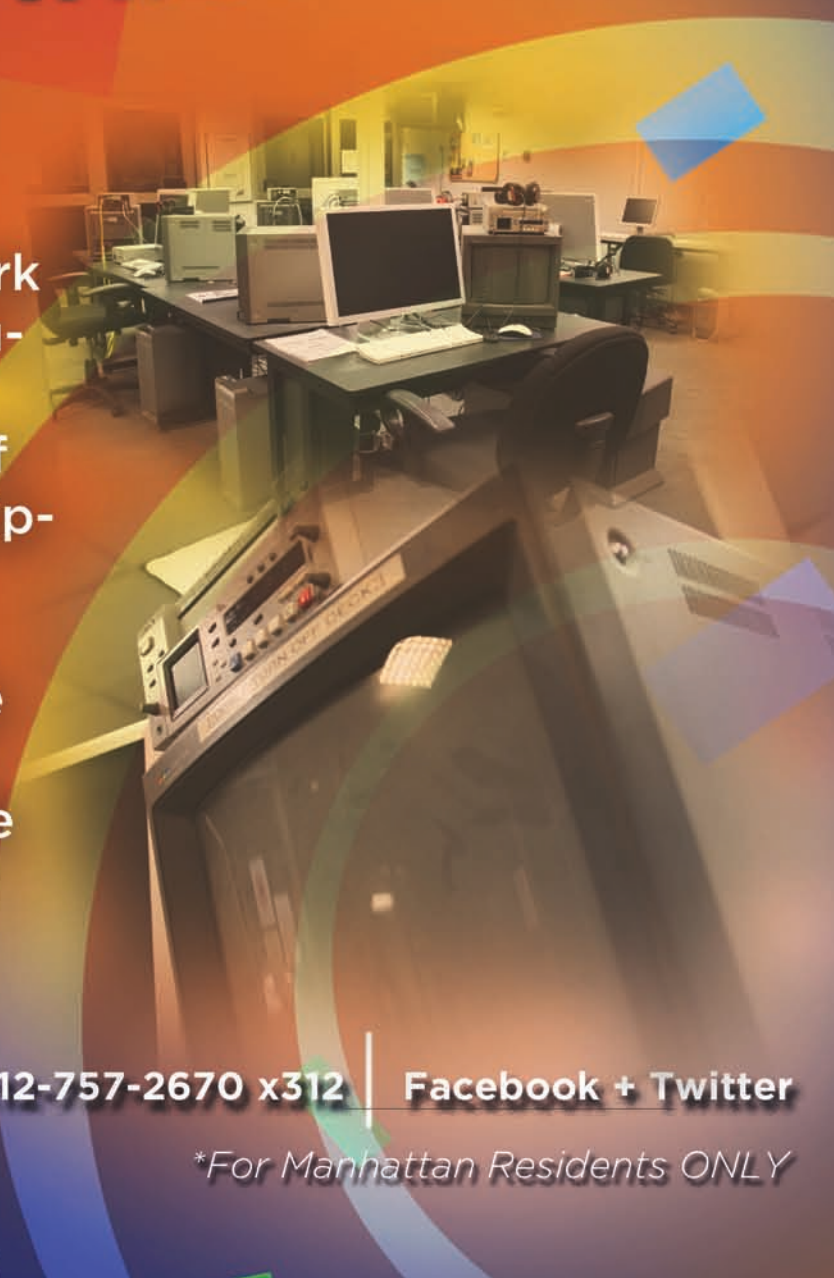
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*Is it really Free?* The answer is simply “yes.” Manhattan Neighborhood Network has been serving the Manhattan community with **FREE** access to video equipment for over 15 years. We only thrive if Manhattan Residents use our **FREE** equipment.

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